

Young Klondike

STORIES OF A GOLD SEEKER.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post Office, by Frank Tousey.

No. 39.

NEW YORK, MAY 17, 1899.

Price 5 Cents.

YOUNG KLONDIKE'S ICE WITCH,

OR

THE GREAT FLOOD ON THE YUKON.

Louis H. Davidson, By AUTHOR OF "YOUNG KLONDIKE."
1817 Clifton Ave., Baltimore, Md.



Just as Young Klondike caught the ice cake the moose made a rush for the Unknown. "By the Jumping Jeremiah, I'm a goner!" gasped the detective, falling backward into the Yukon.

Dr. [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

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YOUNG KLONDIKE.

❖ Stories of a Gold Seeker. ❖

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CHAPTER I.

SELLING OUT THE CLAIMS.

"AND now, gentlemen!" cried Ned Golden, mounting the rostrum of the Dawson City Mining Exchange. "I am about to close out all the claims belonging to Golden & Lucky! This is a golden opportunity and one that you have all waited for a long time; it is also from its very nature one which will not occur again. Let me give a list of these valuable properties before the sale begins.

Whereupon Ned took a paper from his pocket and began to read off the names of some of the most valuable mining claims in the Klondike.

There was a profound hush upon the Exchange floor while he was speaking.

Ned Golden was the celebrated "Young Klondike," the boy miner of the Yukon, and senior partner in the famous firm of Golden & Luckey.

Everyone in and around Dawson City knew more or less of this firm and its doings. Mr. McCullough, the president of the Exchange felt very much disturbed to think that they were about to sell out. He felt that it was going to give the Yukon gold fields what miners call a "black eye" to have Young Klondike give up and go back to the States, and that was just what Ned Golden proposed to do.

And why should Young Klondike not have that privilege if he desired to do so?

Together with his partners, Dick Luckey, Edith Welton and the Unknown he had worked hard in the Klondike, and his efforts had been rewarded most generously.

Only a comparatively short time before Ned and Dick were two poor clerks in New York City, who determined to go to the Klondike to seek their fortunes.

When they arrived at the gold diggings they were not simple enough to expect to find gold growing on trees, or to expect to pick it up in the streets of Dawson City.

Quite the contrary, the boys fully realized that if they wanted wealth they must work for it, and work hard. They had done so, and their efforts had been rewarded. They were now very rich, and if they took proper care of their wealth it would never be necessary for them to do any hard work again.

It was the same with Edith Welton, the third partner in the firm of Golden & Luckey.

Edith was a young San Francisco girl, who had come out to Dawson City to look for her father.

The steamer in which she took passage was wrecked off the coast of Alaska, and the sailors took to the boats. Edith was the only passenger, and for some reason she was deserted by the captain and crew, and would, no doubt, have perished if the wreck had not been sighted by the steamer in which Ned and Dick had taken passage from Seattle had not happened to be passing at the time.

In spite of the high sea that was running the boys put off in a boat and rescued Edith, and she accompanied them to Dawson City, only to find that her father had gone on to South Africa. Then Edith joined fortunes with Ned and Dick, and had shared their wanderings ever since; being an equal partner in the firm of Golden & Luckey, she had also shared their wealth.

As for the Unknown, the odd little detective who was always seen with Golden and Luckey and who was the fourth partner of the firm, we shall speak of him later. He was not present on the Exchange this morning, nor was Edith, for the excellent reason that no ladies were admitted.

In a clear, ringing voice Young Klondike read off the list of mining properties owned by the firm.

Among them was the famous Young Klondike Mine on El Dorado Creek from which alone over a million dollars had been taken in gold dust and nuggets.

Then there was the Owl Creek Mine; the group of mines on Golden Island; the High Rock Mines, the Gold Creek Claims, the famous Trump Card in the mountains opposite Dawson, the French Gulch Claims, the Raccoon Creek Diggings, the Mastodon, the Dead Horse Digging, an enormously rich claim, the Yellow Queen, on the north bank of the Yukon near Forty Mile Creek, and several others which had been worked with more or less success.

"And now, gentlemen, what am I offered for the lot?" called out Young Klondike. "If there is anybody here who cares to make a bid, any syndicate represented who can assure me that they will make a bid within ten days' time, I will let the lot go at a low figure, for we have determined to give up mining and return to New York to enjoy our money. We have worked hard, and my partners fully agree with me that we are entitled to a rest."

"It is useless to put such a question, Young Klondike," said Mr. McCullough. "Of course there is no one man on the Exchange rich enough to buy out Golden & Luckey. As for a syndicate I have been trying for a week to form one, but I have met with no success. The amount required is altogether too large."

"Perhaps it is not as large as you think for, gentlemen," called Dick Luckey, from his place on the floor of the Exchange. "We are determined to sell out and you will find us most reasonable in our views. Make us an offer and you may be surprised to find it entertained."

"Better put them up one by one, Young Klondike," called Barney McGraw, always a good friend of the boys. "I've done a good business for a long time now, and as I have always worked alone I don't care to enter into any syndicate, but I am willing to bid a good price on one or two of these claims."

So Ned began the sale by offering the celebrated Young Klondike Mine, with all its buildings and machinery, and its acres of undeveloped mining land along the line of El Dorado Creek.

The bidding began at fifty thousand dollars, Barney McGraw starting it, and Barney's last bid was a round million.

No one ventured to bid against him after that, and the Young Klondike was knocked down to Barney McGraw.

"I'm glad you have got it, Barney!" exclaimed Ned.

"So am I!" said Dick. "Worked as you work a mine, giving all your attention to it, you are safe to get back your purchase money the first year. There is no end to the gold on the Young Klondike. I believe we would have made more money even than

we have if we had just stayed right there and never made a move anywhere else."

"Faith and I don't know anything about that," said Barney, "but this much I do know. I am going to pay one million dollars for the property, and I wouldn't take two for it if the same was offered me cash down on the nail."

Then the auction went forward. Claim after claim was knocked down to the members of the Exchange.

The bidding was spirited, and the results far exceeded Ned's expectations, for it is not easy to dispose of so large a number of valuable holdings at one time in Dawson City or anywhere else.

When the sale was finished the once famous Klondike mine owners, Golden & Luckey, did not possess a single holding.

Five million four hundred thousand was the amount realized by the sale.

Last of all Ned put up his own seat on the Exchange at auction, and then Dick and then the Unknown.

These seats brought a thousand dollars each.

"Gentlemen," said Young Klondike, "I am authorized by my partners, and I speak for myself as well, to present to you the price of these seats for the purpose of founding a miner's library for the benefit of the Exchange."

Cheers rang out as Ned spoke these words.

"We are blame sorry to lose you, Young Klondike!" called one grizzled old miner.

"Indeed, we are!" shouted another.

"Good luck to you, boys, wherever you go!" cried a third.

"Come back to us soon!"

"Don't forget us in Dawson!"

These and similar cries were heard all over the room.

When all was quiet Ned spoke again.

"Now, then, once more let me say a word!" he began. "This library will be composed solely of books on mining and my advice to you all is to study them carefully. Poor claims worked scientifically can often be made to pay in handsome fashion, while on the other hand even a good claim worked without a knowledge of mining is often abandoned as worthless by one man, only to be taken up by another and worked with good success. Read, study your business; it means money to you, and now, gentlemen, before I say farewell I want you all to meet me once more on the floor of the Exchange on the evening of the tenth at eight o'clock, when I shall have the pleasure of dining with every member of the Dawson City Mining Exchange, I hope. Bring your wives, those who have them, and come prepared for a jolly good time. On the eleventh, if all goes well I shall leave Dawson in my new steam yacht the Ice Witch and start for St. Michaels. If we find the river closed in any part we shall wait until it opens, for we are determined to make the entire journey to Juneau by water. From there we go in the yacht to San Francisco, and if she stands the journey well we may continue on around Cape Horn to New York City. That is where I belong, gentlemen, and there

I propose to make my home. Now, good-day to all of you and many thanks for the liberal recognition you have given my firm."

Young Klondike stepped down from the rostrum, which, in fact, was nothing but a table placed on the platform at the end of the Exchange.

The members crowded about him and also about Dick Luckey, shaking hands and offering their best wishes for future success.

It was with strange sensations that Ned and Dick pushed their way to the street.

Instead of being the biggest mine owners on the Klondike, they now found themselves without a single claim.

CHAPTER II.

THE NIGHT ALARM.

ALTHOUGH it was only May the Yukon River at Dawson City was already clear of ice. Further up it was still frozen in places, and further down—the Yukon runs northwest for a considerable distance let it be remembered—it was reported to be still frozen solid.

Ned, however, felt sure that the time of danger had passed, and before he could reach the ice fields lower down the river they would have broken up.

With no little trouble and at great expense, he had succeeded in building a handsome steam yacht, which had been christened the "Ice Witch." No such craft had ever been seen in Dawson City before, or was likely to be seen there again in a hurry.

She was long and roomy, had a fine cabin and splendid kitchen arrangements, the steward's pantry being supplied with the very best the market afforded regardless of price.

Besides all these things, there was a treasure room where a large amount of gold could be safely stowed away.

It was Young Klondike's purpose to carry the money received for his claims with him. Some of this, of course, would be in checks and drafts on San Francisco, but exchange on California is hard to obtain in Dawson, and it would be necessary to take a large amount of gold dust and nuggets if he wished to put the big deal through to a finish before leaving Dawson City, and this was Young Klondike's plan.

"Seems strange not to own a single mine, don't it, Ned?" remarked Dick, as they walked along.

"Indeed it does," replied Ned. "I wonder what Edith will say when she finds that we have actually sold out?"

"She will be glad enough," said Dick. "I know just how she feels about it. Edith would never say a word so long as she thought we wanted to stay here, but I know she is heartily tired of this roaming about, and would like to settle down in some one place."

"As for the Unknown, I don't believe he cares a cent whether we stay or go."

"Perhaps not, but I believe he would rather go; Zed is tired of this knocking about. Last winter was a hard one, and—hello! There he comes now!"

They had almost reached the levee where a small steamer had just come in from Forty Mile with a lot of Klondikers loaded down with packs and bags and boxes, a usual sight enough in Dawson at this time of year, and one which would not have attracted the attention of the boys for a moment if they had not caught sight of a little man who stood upon the levee watching the passengers disembark.

He was short and stout, and wore big cavalry boots which came almost up to his knees, while upon his head was a battered plug hat, which had not seen the smoothing iron for many a moon.

This was the famous Unknown, the fourth partner in the firm of Golden & Luckey. Just who he was or what he was, even Young Klondike himself could not have told if he had been asked, although he and Dick had fallen in with this man in New York just before they left for the Klondike, and again on the voyage up from Seattle, and he had been with them ever since.

Sometimes the boys called him Zed, which was short for Zedekiah, which the Unknown declared was his Christian name, but oftener he was called simply the Unknown, for the reason that no amount of persuasion would ever induce him to tell his true name.

This singular man claimed to be a detective and to have been all around the world chasing a mysterious criminal.

Who this criminal was or what crime he had committed was also a mystery, for the Unknown would never divulge the secret.

Ned had seen him and so had Dick and Edith, for the Unknown's man, as he called him, had been encountered on one occasion near Juneau and chased to the coast of Siberia, where after a series of startling adventures he managed to escape to a British steamer and was seen no more.

As well as though they had been told the boys knew why the little detective stood there on the levee watching the passengers as they came ashore.

"Look, Dick!" cried Young Klondike. "The Unknown is watching for his man."

"That's what," replied Dick. "I wonder if he expects him by that steamer?"

"I'm sure I hope not! We've had quite enough bother about that mysterious individual; to have Mr. Man chasing the Ice Witch all the way to St. Michaels, or to have to give up our proposed journey for the purpose of chasing Mr. Man would be a calamity, and for my part I want none of it. Let's go down on the levee and try to get Zed away. If we can do that he'll be pretty sure to forget all about Mr. Man in a little while."

They hurried on, but were too late to avoid the trouble of which they felt afraid.

As they approached the little detective, they saw him suddenly make a bolt for a man who came off the steamer loaded down with a bag and a grip and a

huge bundle strapped to his back, and seize him roughly by the throat.

The man started back in terror, as well he might, for the Unknown looked quite fierce.

"By the Jumping Jeremiah, my man at last!" he shouted. "Watch me put the bracelets on him, boys. Ye gods and little fishes, wrong again! Sir, I beg your pardon most humbly. I will see you later on and explain."

Now all this was the work of a moment. Before the astonished prospector realized what was happening the Unknown had pulled off his plug hat, and was bowing most politely.

"Is this man crazy, or what the blazes is the matter with him?" growled the prospector as the boys came along. "If you are his friends, young fellers, I advise you to take him away. If it wasn't that I am loaded down the way I am I'd break his blamed head!"

"Why, my dear sir, you mustn't mind me," chuckled the detective. "Why, you are loaded. I didn't notice it before. Allow me. I'll carry part of your load very cheerfully. I—"

"Ah, go West! Go drown yourself! Hire some one to shoot you!" cried the irate prospector, and he struck at the Unknown with his grip, sending his tall hat flying along the levee, after which he hurried away with the crowd.

The bystanders set up a laugh as the detective started off to chase his hat along the levee, and no little fun was poked at the boys, who were glad to hurry the detective away, although as soon as he recovered his hat that eccentric individual almost insisted in following up the stranger.

"By the Jumping Jeremiah, you mustn't interfere with me, boys!" he cried. "I'm out for business, can't you see it? Dick, you let go of me. Ned, will you be quiet and allow me to attend to my own affairs?"

"Not much!" cried Young Klondike. "Say, Zed, I believe you really have wheels under your plug hat somewhere. Now, you just come along and be quiet. Why, Dick and I have just been putting through the biggest sort of deal on the Dawson Exchange, and now here you are disgracing us before the entire town."

Thus saying, Ned got the detective by one arm, while Dick seized him by the other, and together they hurried the little man down the levee toward a certain boat builder's yard, where the Ice Witch lay.

"There, there, boys, you can let go of me," said the Unknown, when they were out of range of the crowd. "It's all over now, and too late to do anything. I'll behave."

The boys let go their hold, and they all walked on together.

This was a common experience for them. Every little while the Unknown was seized with a fit like this, and would jump on some perfectly harmless individual, declaring that he had found his man at last.

"What in the world made you do it, Zed?" demanded Young Klondike. "I thought you had sworn off on that? You faithfully promised me that you never would jump on another stranger like that again."

"Did I, dear boy? I'd forgotten. Well, perhaps I did; but this is a peculiar case."

"It's always a peculiar case with you. Of course you knew perfectly well when you saw that fellow come off the boat that he was not your man."

"Ned, you make a mistake. Did I ever jump on a man in my life that he did not turn out to be a scoundrel in the end?"

"Perhaps not. I am willing to admit that your men are a bad lot as a rule; but what about this one? Why did you jump on him?"

"Because, Ned, he was one of those who was with Mr. Man when we chased him to Siberia. Did he know me? Of course he knew me perfectly well. If you had let me alone, I would have worked that job out to a finish all right. If that fellow is here in Dawson City you will find, dear boy, that Mr. Man is not far away."

By this time the boys and their friend, the detective, had reached the boat builder's yard.

Ned opened the gate and they went inside. Right ahead, in a little basin built in from the bank of the river, lay the Ice Witch, a yacht fit for an artist to picture, so perfect was it in all its outlines.

Edith Welton, dressed in a comfortable yachting suit, sat upon the deck reading, for the day was warm and sunny.

Several men were engaged in putting a fresh coat of paint upon that portion of the craft above the water line. Everything looked decidedly like a speedy start for St. Michaels. Edith put aside her book and fluttered her handkerchief as the boys and the detective approached.

"Well, Ned, did you sell out everything?" she asked.

"Everything except the mine up Moose Creek," replied Ned, "and that, as you know, I have made over to your friend, Mrs. Colvin, as a reward for her faithful services during our long stay in the Klondike. We are without a claim to-day, Edith?"

"I may be, but you are not, Ned," laughed Edith, gayly, as they came upon the deck of the yacht.

"Ha! What's this I hear?" cried the Unknown. "Ye gods and little fishes! have I been deceived? Does Young Klondike still remain the possessor of a claim?"

"It is the male members of the firm of Golden & Luckey that I refer to," said Edith; "they, one and all, have a claim on me for my gratitude for the great kindness and consideration shown me since we have been together. I hope to live to pay the debt."

"Nonsense!" cried the detective, "as though we were not all deeply in your debt for the many kind acts you have done for us. How many times have you saved Ned's life? A dozen at least. As for

mine, I've been saved so many times by your courage and promptness of action that by the Jumping Jeremiah, I've lost all run of them, and Dick——"

"Dick can speak for himself," broke in the boy. "If Edith is indebted to me for one favor, I am indebted to her for a dozen at least. It's the merest rubbish to talk it any other way."

Edith laughed heartily.

"But we don't hear from Ned," she exclaimed. "Has Young Klondike nothing to say?"

"Young Klondike is willing that you should let him have a claim on you," replied Ned, quietly.

"Oh, oh, oh!" cried the Unknown, tossing up his tall hat and catching it on his head in the most skillful fashion as it came down again. "Dick, did you ever hear the like of that?"

Edith blushed rosy red and walked forward on the deck.

"Go for it, Ned. Go for it!" whispered the Unknown. "You'll get there in the end."

"I don't believe it," said Dick. "If there is any one thing Edith detests more than another it is love-making. She positively won't hear to it. Ned has tried it many times before and has always failed."

But Young Klondike said nothing. He turned away and went into the galley to give some orders to the steward.

Perhaps there was a better understanding between him and Edith than Dick thought for. It was an open secret that Ned had been in love with the beautiful girl for a long time.

Dinner was soon served and in the afternoon Edith went up in town to call on her old friend Mrs. Colvin, who was heartbroken at the thought of losing her.

Ned and Dick had business on the Exchange, and they went there to attend to it.

As for the Unknown he disappeared shortly after dinner and was not seen again until almost midnight.

Edith had retired to her stateroom long before he returned and Dick had also turned in. Ned was pacing the deck alone when he heard the detective's knock on the yard gate.

He hastened to open it admitting the Unknown.

"Where in the world have you been?" he asked.

"Off on business," was the reply. "I've been hunting my man."

"Did you find him?"

"No, I did not."

"Of course not. Did you see that fellow you jumped on?"

"Yes; I not only saw him, but I had a long talk with him. He did not remember me for the moment when I jumped on him that time on the levee, but he does now."

"I dare say. I reckon he wasn't very cordial."

"He was cordial enough to take a hundred dollars of my money, Ned."

"What in the world did you give him that for?"

"For information."

"About your man?"

"Yes."

"Did you get it?"

"I did."

"Hello! You seem to be unusually serious. Anything wrong?"

"Nothing wrong, dear boy, but I am serious as you say. My man was on his way to Dawson City last accounts. He may be here now."

"Hello!"

"It's a fact."

"I hope he will keep out of our way, then. I don't want to see him show up here."

"I hope he may," replied the detective, seriously. "Ned, we are breaking up business here now, and I am going off on my travels again. I'm going to tell you a secret, dear boy."

"Your name! That's the biggest secret I know anything about."

"Not yet. I may divulge it soon, though. I'm going to tell you who is employing me to hunt this man."

"Ah, that's a step toward the solution of the great mystery."

"It is the Czar of Russia."

"Honestly?"

"It is true, Ned. I am not at all in a joking mood to-night. In fact, I consider my life somewhat in danger. Yes, the czar is my employer, and there is a heavy reward waiting for me if I can capture Robert Magillicuddy and deliver him in St. Petersburg."

"Phew!" cried Ned. "I am not surprised, however. I have not forgotten our adventures at Petropolvsky. I have long suspected that you were a Russian spy."

"That's what I am, Ned, although by birth I am an American. You saw me arrested by Russian officials at Petropolvsky and you may wonder why that was. I will tell you. Secretly those officers are Nihilists. They knew me and knew my influence at the Russian Court. What they wanted most of all was to put me out of the way, which they certainly would have done if you had not rescued me as you did."

"Come! This is all mighty interesting!" cried Ned. "So Mr. Man's name is Magillicuddy. I heard you call him Mac on more than one occasion I remember, but, Zed, having told me that much, and I see that you are in earnest, why not tell me more?"

"What more?"

"The nature of Magillicuddy's crime."

"Well, I don't know why I shouldn't tell you, dear boy. Indeed, I might have done so long ago, but there was so much said about it that for a joke I held the information back. You see I am under positive orders not to speak."

"Are you in communication with the czar at the present time?"

"Yes. I have been right along. Every mail brings me a letter from his Imperial Majesty. You never see them, but I get them just the same."

"But, Zed, how can you be working for the czar

and at the same time go knocking about the Klondike with us?"

"It's easily explained. It has been known to both myself and the czar that Magillicuddy is hanging about the Klondike country somewhere. I have taken every possible means to locate him, and until I do I may as well be in one part of the country as another."

"Does the czar know that you have been making money out of mining while attending to his business?"

"Certainly he does. It would have been as much as my life was worth to do it without his permission. By the way, Ned, how much are we worth, anyhow?"

"As a firm?"

"Yes."

"Well, we are to receive over five millions and a half for our claims. Then we have a million on deposit in the bank here at Dawson City, and as much more in Juneau."

"That's seven millions and a half."

"Then there is over four millions deposited in San Francisco banks."

"Which makes between eleven and twelve millions all told."

"Yes; take everything together, including some real estate Dick and I have purchased in New York, we are worth at least twelve millions."

"And this is to be divided equally among us when we part?"

"Of course."

"Three millions apiece is a very tidy sum, Ned. There is no denying that we have done pretty well."

"I doubt if there is anyone in the whole Klondike country who has done any better, Zed."

"I'm sure there is not, and it is all owing to you."

"Oh, no!"

"Oh, yes, dear boy! You have given the closest attention to business, and you have met your reward. To be sure, I have not always approved of your methods. It often seemed to me that we should do a lot better to settle down in one place instead of running all over the lot, but the proof of the pudding is in the eating. You have stuck to your own way of doing business, and you have studied hard and become as thorough a little expert as can be found in all Alaska. We've got there, Ned, and I say again it is all owing to you."

"Thank you, Zed. I appreciate the compliment," Ned quietly replied.

He was considerably touched. He had never before seen the detective so thoroughly in earnest. It seemed a good time to urge him to clear away the mystery which had always surrounded him, and Ned tried to bring him back to the point.

"What crime has this man Magillicuddy committed?" he asked. "You know you were going to tell me that. Don't forget."

"Why, Ned, he tried to assassinate the czar. He is an anarchist, a Nihilist, although by birth a Scotchman. He is, or rather was, also a detective. We were both detectives together, or rather Secret Service agents, working among the foreigners in St. Peters-

burg under the direct orders of the czar. One day Mac suddenly turned upon the emperor and struck at him with a knife, inflicting a painful wound, but not killing him. I was present at the time and we were both arrested and thrown into prison from which Mac managed to escape——"

"Hold on," said Ned. "You keep calling him Mac and when we met him that time on the coffin ship you called you Mac. Are you brothers?"

"No, no, no! By the Jumping Jeremiah, no. Never mind my name now. You will learn it in good time. As I was saying, at last I managed to convince the czar of my entire innocence, and I was set free under the promise that I would devote my life to hunting down Magillicuddy and turning him over to the Russian authorities. I have followed the man all over the world. There never was nor never will be such a globe trotter as this commission has made me, and now I believe I am at last on the track of my man."

"You believe he is here in Dawson?"

"I do, and that brings me down to business. If I can capture him I suppose you will raise no objection to me taking him on board the Ice Witch and holding him a prisoner until we can run him across to Siberia?"

"Of course I can't refuse you, Zed. Equally, of course, I'd rather not."

"I understand. There is no other way of getting him out of the Klondike with any chance of holding him safe, so I guess I shall have to ask you to do it, near boy."

"All right; consider it settled. I'm sure Edith and Dick will make no objection. Now, I'm going to turn in. Good-night."

"Good-night," replied the Unknown. "I shall watch here on deck awhile longer. Perhaps I may decide not to go bed at all."

Ned went down into the cabin and without undressing threw himself into his bunk.

He had a feeling that the night was not going to pass without some exciting incident and he was right, for he had scarcely dozed off when a tremendous racket began on deck directly over his head.

Ned sprang to his feet and drew his revolver.

At the same instant several shots were heard on deck and Dick jumped out of his bunk aroused by the night alarm.

CHAPTER III.

YOUNG KLONDIKE TREATS HIS FELLOW KLONDIKERS TO A GREAT SURPRISE AND SO DOES THE UNKNOWN.

"WHAT in thunder is it, Ned?" demanded Dick.

"Trouble on deck. The Unknown is up there. Quick! Quick!"

The boys rushed up the companionway.

Reaching the deck, they could see no one, but as

they looked across the boat yard they perceived the Unknown chasing a man toward the gate.

"A thief!" cried Dick.

"The Unknown's man!" echoed Ned.

Dick thought he was joking, but Young Klondike was quite serious. In the moonlight it was almost as easy to see the flying figures in the boat yard as though it had been daytime. Ned was positive that he recognized in the foremost figure the man they had chased to Siberia in the coffin ship.

Just then the man turned and fired two shots at the detective, who instantly returned the compliment from his own revolver.

The shots on neither side appeared to have any effect, however, and the man being now near the fence, sprang up, caught the top of the boards and flung himself over.

The Unknown tried to follow his example, but missed his hold and fell back heavily.

His plug hat flew off and his big boots went up. There he lay struggling on the ground and seemingly unable to rise.

Ned and Dick sprang over the rail of the yacht and ran to his assistance.

"What in thunder is the matter with you, Zed?" cried Young Klondike, for as soon as he took hold of the Unknown's hand the little detective sprang lightly to his feet.

"I'm sure I don't know. Some kind of a kink in my side. I tried to get up and couldn't. Confound it, boys, I've missed my man."

"No," laughed Dick. "It was your man, of course. Oh, yes. Couldn't have been anybody else, but if I had been asked I should have said it was probably some thief sneaking on board the Ice Witch to see what he could steal."

"You are wrong, Dick," said Ned, gravely. "I saw the fellow. It was actually the Unknown's man."

"Ha, Ned! You did catch sight of him then?" cried the detective. "Was I wrong?"

"It was the same man who we followed to Siberia in the coffin ship."

"Exactly. Now, then, here goes for my last chase. I shall be back in time, dear boy, and I shall bring my man!"

By this time the Unknown had succeeded in unfastening the gate, the padlock having given him some trouble.

He threw back the gate and ran out into the night; several days passed and still he had not returned.

Young Klondike and his friends were not very much concerned about him, however.

The Unknown was quite in the habit of going off in this style, so there was nothing surprising in his absence now.

Meanwhile the boys were working hard to close up their business in Dawson City and get away.

The money for the claims was paid into the bank in part; in part paid in mining stocks which were consid-

ered as good as cash, and in part in drafts on Juneau and San Francisco.

When everything was settled, Young Klondike held about a million dollars on deposit in the Dawson City bank ready to be transferred to the treasure room of the Ice Witch.

All arrangements being thus happily completed, Young Klondike began to wish that the Unknown would show himself.

Of course it was quite out of the question to start without the detective.

Moreover, the day of the farewell dinner had now arrived, and said dinner would have been quite incomplete without the Unknown.

Ned had spared no expense to make the affair a great success.

The invitations were limited to the members of the Mining Exchange and a few business men in Dawson with whom the boys were intimately acquainted.

No expense was spared to make the affair a complete success.

The big hall of the Exchange was decorated with evergreens, and a band of music made up of miners who could play on various instruments was engaged for the occasion.

The dinner arrangements were placed in the hands of the proprietor of the New Victoria hotel and the bill of fare, if we chose to give it, would surprise our readers as it did many of those who sat down at the long tables; but there was a bigger surprise than this in store for Young Klondike's friends.

At seven o'clock in the evening, the hour set for the dinner, the Exchange was crowded to its utmost capacity.

There were many ladies present and some of the dresses were really handsome, but the Klondikers care little for dress and they were wondering what had become of their host, for none of Ned's party had as yet arrived.

The band began to play a lively air, and the guests were looking longingly at the tables when all at once the Unknown, dressed in his usual style burst in among them.

"Ye gods and little fishes, then I'm not too late!" he exclaimed. "I was afraid I should be. Where's Young Klondike? I want to see him right away."

"You can't see him, Mr. Zed, because he hasn't arrived yet," replied Mr. McCullough. "We are all waiting for him, and for my part I am beginning to wonder what the delay means. When I saw you come in I was in hopes you could explain."

"Indeed I can't," said the detective. "I haven't seen the boys in a week. I've been off up the country on business. I—ah—here they come now!"

Suddenly the door was opened and the band struck up "Hail to the Chief."

In walked Ned with Edith leaning upon his arm and Dick walking by his side.

The boys were in full dress and each wore a white flower in the buttonholes of their coat.

Edith was dressed in white satin and looked for all

the world like a bride, while behind the party walked the Reverend Mr. Mills of the Episcopal Mission at Dawson City. Mrs. Colvin also walked by Edith's side.

"By the Jumping Jeremiah, what does this mean?" gasped the Unknown, falling back.

And his surprise was shared by every Klondiker in the room.

The mystery was explained when the party ascended the raised platform at the rear of the room, the band playing a wedding march, for Ned turned and addressed the crowd.

"Friends," he said, in his usual quiet way, "you are perhaps surprised to see us come here among you dressed as we are. Naturally it suggests to your mind a wedding, and allow me to inform you that the suggestion is quite correct, for that is exactly what it means. Mr. Mills will now perform the ceremony. I am to be married to Miss Edith Welton, and as you have all been true friends to us both since we came to the Klondike, we have chosen this method of surprising you. Gentlemen, quiet for a moment, please. The ceremony is about to begin."

"By the Jumping Jeremiah!" gasped the Unknown again, and then he went up on the platform, for Ned, catching sight of him, beckoned for him to join them.

And so Young Klondike was quietly married to Edith.

Mrs. Colvin gave the bride away, Dick acting as best man. The Unknown was so overcome with amazement that he could only stand and stare, making such remarks as "by Jumping Jeremiah!" and "Ye goes and little fishes!"

The band then struck up a lively air and the miners pressed forward to offer their congratulations.

Ned cut it short by calling out:

"To the table everybody! Dinner is ready! If anyone here goes hungry to-night it will be his own fault!"

The Unknown pressed forward, seized Edith and kissed her heartily, shaking hands with Ned in the most frantic style.

"How could you do it, Young Klondike?" he cried. "And you never told me one word about it!"

"How could we when you were not here to tell?" replied Ned.

"Surprised, Zed?" asked Edith.

"Well, some."

"No more than I am. Ned has asked me to marry him at least twenty times, and I am surprised to think that after saying no so often I ever should have been induced to say yes at last."

"Not sorry, I hope, Edith?" said Ned, laughing.

"Not a bit. Only surprised at myself."

"Hold on!" whispered the Unknown, "don't say a word, and by the Jumping Jeremiah, I'll surprise you again. Look at me, Ned—look right at me, Dick, and you, too, Edith, I've caught my man."

CHAPTER IV.

OFF ON THE ICE WITCH.

WHICH was the most surprised it would be hard to say.

The Unknown had never dreamed that there was any such thing as a wedding in the wind, and as for Edith and the boys, nothing could have surprised them more than to hear the detective thus gravely announce that he had at last run his man to earth.

"Have you got the bracelets on him, Zed?" asked Edith, incredulously.

"Yes, are they actually on?" demanded Dick. "I shall believe it when I see it and not before."

"Yes, they are on—they are actually on," said the detective. "You can make all the fun you like, boys, but it's true. I've got there at last."

"Where did you catch him, Zed?" inquired Young Klondike, who felt perfect confidence that the detective was telling the truth.

"About ten miles up the Klondike. He was heading for El Dorado Creek. I came across him at night in a camp and managed to smoke him out. He was among that load of passengers, who came up from Forty Mile just as I supposed."

"And where is he now?"

"Safe. I'm not going to say any more about it. We have a wedding dinner on hand and it wants to be put through. Later on we'll talk about my man."

So the Unknown pulled away and Ned and Edith took the head of one of the long tables and the wedding feast began.

We are not going to describe it further than to state that it was a complete success.

Nothing of the kind had ever occurred in Dawson City. The only thing that vexed the honest Klondikers was that they had been given no opportunity to make wedding presents. This Ned knew perfectly well would come later, and he determined to avoid it if he could, for there were many poor miners whom he had befriended who would have spent their last cent in that direction.

The dinner over, dancing began, and the evening passed merrily.

Shortly after midnight the wedding party left, and were driven in one of the few carriages of which Dawson can boast to the boat yard.

Mr. McCullough, Barney McGraw, Mrs. Colvin, the Reverend Mr. Mills, the proprietor of the New Victoria Hotel, and a few other intimate friends who had received the tip followed them.

Steam was up on the Ice Witch when they went aboard.

There was a steward, who was to act also as cook and engineer, but these two comprised the entire crew.

Young Klondike was entirely able to pilot his own boat down the Yukon, and he proposed to do it. As for Dick, he could run the engine on a pinch.

It was the intention of Young Klondike to start

away at once. There was a final leave-taking in the cabin, and then Ned went into the pilot house.

"Good-by to Dawson! Good-by, friends!" he shouted, as he gave the engineer the bell.

"Good-by, Young Klondike! Good-by, all!" was shouted back from the wharf; then the Ice Witch backed out of the basin and Ned turned her head down the Yukon.

Hats were waved and handkerchiefs fluttered in the moonlight and so Young Klondike sailed away from Dawson.

When they first set foot in the Klondike city he and Dick were only two poor boys seeking their fortunes. Now they were off on the Ice Witch many times over millionaires.

All through these leave-takings the Unknown stood quietly by the pilot house. The detective was not the man to make friends, and he was not in it, so to speak.

Suddenly Dick turned to him exclaiming:

"By gracious, there's one most important thing forgotten! Zed—your man!"

"Well, what about him?" asked the detective.

"Forgotten, I say! How could you do it?"

"Indeed, he is not forgotten," replied the detective coolly, "my man is all right. Did you forget to have the gold in the bank brought aboard?"

"Not much! Ned and I attended to that job just before we started for the wedding. The gold is safe in the treasure room at the present time."

"So's my man," replied the Unknown, taking off his hat and dusting it with his sleeve.

"What!" cried Dick.

"Do you mean to say you have put your man in with a million dollars in gold?" Edith exclaimed.

"That's exactly what I have done," replied the detective. "Isn't that right, Ned?"

"I don't know, I'm sure, but I shouldn't wonder," replied Ned, looking out of the window of the pilot house.

"I mean isn't it right to do it? Didn't you tell me I could?"

"You don't have to ask my permission," said Ned.

"The Ice Witch is as much your property as it is mine."

"But it was all understood?"

"Certainly."

"I only wanted Dick and Edith to know that I had not been doing it without your knowledge, that's all."

"I can hardly realize it," laughed Edith. "Can it be possible that we have actually got the Unknown's man on board the Ice Witch! That terrible man, who has caused us so much anxiety."

"You have," replied the detective. "I brought him down this evening and locked him in the treasure room. As the gold is all packed in boxes, there is no chance of his stealing it, and as the lock is a patent arrangement, I am dead sure he can't get out. Want to see him, Edith?"

"I confess I have some curiosity that way," said

Edith; "but we had better not disturb him to-night."

"I shall go in there later and have a talk with him," declared the Unknown. "Ned, if you want to let me I'll take the wheel to-night."

"No," replied Ned, "I shall stick to my post. Edith, my dear, you had better go to bed—and as for you, Dick, there is no necessity for you staying up. I can act lookout as well as pilot to-night."

"I'm going down to the treasure room to see my man," said the Unknown, "and then I think I shall turn in, too."

Edith went directly to her stateroom, but Dick declared he was going with the Unknown to see the prisoner.

They went together into the extreme bow of the yacht and the Unknown proceeded to unlock the iron door of the treasure room.

"Are you there, Mac?" he called out.

"That's where I am, Mac!" answered a voice out of the darkness.

It gave Dick a curious sensation to hear it. He found it very hard to realize that the Unknown had actually captured his man at last.

The Unknown now flashed the lantern into the treasure room.

Over in one corner, lying upon a mattress, was a man tied hand and foot.

"Isn't it rather hard to keep him so?" whispered Dick.

"No," replied the Unknown. "You don't know my man."

"Mac! Oh, Mac!" called the prisoner, feebly.

"Hello!" replied the Unknown.

"Are you going to keep me this way until we get to Juneau? I shall be dead before we reach Forty Mile. I'm sure I shall."

"No," replied the Unknown. "I am not going to do anything of the sort. You'll stay until we have passed Forty Mile, however, for I don't propose to take any chances with you. After that I shall give you the run of the deck under some restrictions. I hardly think you will care to swim for the shore down the river, Mac."

"No, sir, I've no desire to make food for the wolves. I'm no such fool."

"So I thought. Don't you fret, old man, we'll take care of you. You are going straight back to St. Petersburg, that's where you are going. There are no Nihilist officers at Petropolovsky now. We shall run the Ice Witch over there and then you and I will start on our long journey across Siberia. Oh, that will be great fun."

Dick listened to all this with no little awe.

Ned had explained the situation to him and he began to realize how important a prisoner the Unknown's man actually was.

The detective was as proud of his capture as a hen with one chicken.

"Want to see him, Dick?" he asked.

"I don't mind," said Dick.

"Come on, then."

Flashing his lantern ahead, the Unknown led the way into the treasure room, and Dick bent over the prisoner.

He was a small man, not unlike the Unknown himself in general appearance.

Dick instantly recognized him as the man whom they had chased to Siberia.

"Well," he growled, "am I a wild beast to be exhibited? Never mind. I'll get square some of these days."

"You'll be squared all right enough when you get to St. Petersburg, if you ever do," the Unknown replied.

"Well put in," snarled the man. "If I ever do. Let me tell you, Mac, I never shall get to St. Petersburg—you'll see."

"I expect," said the detective, "that long before we reach there I shall receive a telegram from the Czar of Russia ordering me to drop you in some quick silver mine in Siberia. It's an awful fate I know, but you richly deserve it, and I shan't be at all sorry to get you off my hands."

"I suppose not," grumbled the man. "You have been hunting me a long time, Mac."

"Near twenty years, my boy."

"Oh, then it wasn't the present czar he tried to kill?" exclaimed Dick.

"Oh, no! It was his grandfather, but that don't make a bit of difference. He will have to pay the penalty just the same."

When they left the treasure room the detective carefully locked the door and went on deck, but Dick went to his bunk and dreamed that the unknown man came into the cabin and tried to strangle him.

He awoke with a start and finding all quiet and the Ice Witch working her way steadily down the river, he went off to sleep again, and laid it all to the wedding dinner and the mince pie.

CHAPTER V.

THE MYSTERY OF THE TWO MACS.

DICK was up bright and early, and went on deck to relieve Ned at the wheel.

"How has everything gone through the night?" he asked.

"Quiet," replied Ned. "There has been nothing to alarm me, and as I have seen no sign of ice I am beginning to hope that we may not strike any after all."

"I can't believe it," said Dick. "It is altogether too soon for the ice to be gone out of the lower Yukon."

"Perhaps. I think myself that very likely such is the case, but at the worst we shall only have to tie up for a few days. The ice can't hold long now."

"It's dangerous business trying to run down the

river so early, and you know it well enough," remarked Dick. "Still, I am not going to croak, for like enough we shan't have any trouble after all. Where is Edith? Isn't she up yet?"

"Not yet. It was very late when she went to bed, you know."

"I guess I do. I haven't had half sleep enough myself. Where is the Unknown?"

"I haven't seen him for the last hour. Then he told me he was going to turn in and have a little sleep."

"Been watching his man all night, I suppose."

"Been talking all night, Dick. He has told me a lot about his past life and all so seriously that I can't help but believe it. I wish, though, that we had no prisoner on the yacht."

"It is kind of hard on you, old man, to be bothered with anything of that sort on your wedding trip."

"I'm afraid it will lead to trouble, that's all. By the way, did you look into the Unknown's bunk to see if he was there all right?"

"No, I never thought of him."

"I'll do it when I go down then. I don't know what is the matter with me, Dick, but somehow I feel kind of worried about Zed."

"Do you know," said Dick, "I feel the same way, and for the life of me I couldn't tell you why."

"Take the wheel. I'll go down and see if he is all right."

"Call to me when you find him in the bunk, will you, Ned?"

"Certainly, if you wish it. Keep her steady and hold her as near the middle of the stream as you can, Dick."

"Ay, ay, sir!" cried Dick. "To hear is to obey!"

Ned went down into the cabin and in a moment came rushing back again, his face looking rather grave.

"Why, Dick, the Unknown is not in his bunk!" he exclaimed, "and what is more, he hasn't been there."

"Perhaps he is in the treasure room talking to his man," said Dick.

"No, the door is locked."

"Did you open it to see?"

"Couldn't. Edith has my key."

"Well, I have mine, take it," replied Dick.

Each of the boys had provided themselves with a key to the treasure room and the Unknown had one also, but Ned had handed his to Edith to keep because there was a hole in his pocket.

He now took Dick's key and hurried down to the treasure room. A curious sense of trouble came upon him as he inserted the key in the lock.

"Strange that Zed should lock himself in here," he thought. "I don't believe he has done it, either. What can it mean?"

He threw back the door and peered into the treasure room. It was pretty dark, for there was no window, and the only light came in through the open door.

"Zed! Zed!" called Young Klondike.

He saw a man moving over among the boxes of gold, and a voice answered:

"If you are looking for Mac I am Mac, but I doubt if I am the one you want!"

Ned's heart almost stood still. He clapped his hand upon his revolver and drew back.

"Who are you?" he demanded, for the voice was not that of the Unknown.

"Mac," was the reply. "There are two Macs on board this craft, and I am one of them, but I say again I don't know as I am the one you want."

Then the man came forward into the light.

Young Klondike saw that it was the Unknown's prisoner.

He was not only free, but he was armed with a handsome revolver which Ned at once recognized as belonging to the Unknown.

"Don't you shoot, Young Klondike," he said in cool, sarcastic tones. "You may think you have the drop on me, but as a matter of fact I have it on you in the biggest kind of shape. Raise your finger against me and your friend Zed is a dead man."

"What do you mean?" gasped Ned, falling back.

"Simply that I have turned the tables on Mac. He is now my prisoner, and what's more he is hidden where you will never find him until I choose to tell you where he is. Kill me and he starves to death. Take me prisoner and tie me up again, and the same fate will be his, for I shall never open my lips to tell where he is. Now, then, Young Klondike, I'm an older man than you are and I've knocked about the world a good bit. Let me advise you to speak me fair and first of all to give me something to eat."

Here was a puzzling situation. Ned saw at a glance that the mysterious Mr. Magillicuddy had the long end of the stick.

"Go on deck and make yourself at home," he said. "You seem to be boss on the Ice Witch. Don't let anything interfere with your enjoyment on this trip down the Yukon. I should be sorry if you did."

"Thank you," replied the man, with a sneering laugh. "I see your game. You propose to do a little searching here in the treasure room. Do it to your heart's content. You'll not find Mac. Remember that."

Ned made no answer.

Turning abruptly, at the risk of getting a bullet in his back, he hurried on deck and explained the situation to Dick.

Magillicuddy followed him. While Ned was talking he lounged about the deck, but did not speak.

Dick grew greatly excited.

"This is a serious business," he said. "He must have got loose somehow and jumped on the Unknown when he went into the treasure room to have a look at him."

"You can't tell. Perhaps the Unknown himself set him free. He said he was going to do it, you know."

"Maybe he did, and then Magillicuddy turned on him. What are you going to do?"

"What can we do but speak the fellow fair? If we don't, what becomes of the Unknown?"

"If he still lives he is on the Ice Witch, and in that case we ought to be able to find him."

"I don't know, Dick. That fellow speaks very confidently. He would hardly do it unless he felt sure of his ground."

"Then you think the Unknown has been murdered? Shot and thrown overboard, perhaps?"

"No, I don't. I believe the man is giving it to us straight. In some mysterious way, which I don't understand, he has managed to hide the Unknown. Now, then, Dick, let us treat this fellow with every civility and see how the case will come out."

It was an odd conclusion to come to, but then Young Klondike was noted for his original ideas.

Leaning out of the pilot house window, he called:

"Mr. Magillicuddy! Oh, Mr. Magillicuddy! Just look here a moment, will you? I want to introduce you to my partner."

The man slouched toward the pilot house.

He did not seem to know what to make of Ned's way of handling the matter.

"Well, am I going to have some breakfast?" he rudely demanded. "I don't know whether you know it or not, but I'm about starved."

"Presently! Presently!" replied Ned; "just as soon as it is ready you shall have it. I can't very well give it to you before it's cooked."

"Well, then, tell the cook to hurry up. I'm hungry, and after you have given me mine you had better give me some for old Mac. Put it down by the door of your treasure room and I'll see that he gets it. So this young gent is your partner, eh?"

"Yes, sir. Mr. Magillicuddy, Mr. Luckey. Make yourself at home, now; be one of us. Consider everything and everybody on the yacht yours to command."

"You'll find out that's dead right, Young Klondike, before I'm through with you," said Magillicuddy, slouching away.

"You are not afraid to stay here alone with him, Dick?" whispered Ned.

"Not much! Why should I be? I'm armed!"

"Then I'll go down to Edith. I'm worried about her. She must know of this at once."

Leaving Dick to manage the Ice Witch Ned hurried down into the cabin. Edith was just getting up and was, of course, greatly disturbed to learn of the strange disappearance of the Unknown.

Ned hurried to the treasure room and searched it thoroughly. This took only a minute. There was certainly no place where the Unknown could have been hidden here.

Then he hurried to the engineer and questioned him, but Dan Robbins knew nothing and had heard nothing during the night which could in any way help to explain the disappearance of the Unknown.

While Ned was there questioning him, Fred Farrell,

the fireman, who had been taking his sleep came in, and he also was questioned in vain.

"Never turned over since we started, boss," he said. "I'm sure I can't understand the thing at all."

"Very well," replied Ned. "You relieve Mr. Robbins and let him get his sleep. If Magillicuddy comes in here treat him civilly. I rely on you, Farrell, to let me know whatever he says."

"You bet I will, boss. Don't think for a moment that I'm going back on Young Klondike. I'm not that kind of a man."

Then Ned tackled Henri Bonte, the French Canadian steward.

Bonte was busy with the breakfast. He declared that he did not even know that there was such a person as Magillicuddy on board the Ice Witch.

"There you are, are you, Young Klondike?" sneered Magillicuddy, when Ned came back on deck. "Well, what have you found out? A big lot of nothing! I told you just how it would be. Can I have my breakfast now?"

"I have found no trace of my friend," replied Ned. "As for breakfast it will soon be ready. Will you come into the cabin and eat with my wife and myself?"

"No, I'd rather eat here."

"Very good. The steward shall serve you here on deck."

"And the grub for Mac—don't forget that."

"Nothing shall be forgotten. Let me see; you will want a table, and—"

"No, I want nothing. I'm accustomed to roughing it. I'll sit right down here on deck and eat. I've eaten in worse places many's the time."

Breakfast was soon ready. Ned waited on Magillicuddy himself. The man devoured the food placed before him most greedily. He seemed to be half starved.

"Have you put the grub near the door of the treasure room?" he asked, when Ned came up from breakfast a little later to relieve Dick at the wheel.

"Yes. You'll find it there," was the reply.

"And I'll find you watching somewhere around when I go to take it away, I suppose?"

"No; I'm not going to do that."

"Oh! Mebbe you don't want to see Mac again."

"I didn't say that."

"What's your game, Young Klondike?"

"I hope to bring you to your senses. I'm in hopes you'll let the Unknown join us again."

"Hello! Is that what you call old Mac?"

"Yes, that's our name for him."

"And why?"

"Because we don't know any other."

"The deuce you say!" cried Magillicuddy, and then he threw back his head and laughed loud and long.

"Through laughing?" asked Ned, when he had quieted down at last.

"Yes, I am, boss. Want to know what I am laughing at?"

"Well, I confess that I have some curiosity that way."

"I was laughing to think that you and your friends had been knocking about with Mac all this time and did not know his name, for I see that you probably don't."

"I know how to mind my own business—that's one thing I know. Your friend Mac didn't care to tell his name, so I never pressed him. Perhaps you'll tell it now?"

"No; if Mac didn't tell you I won't," replied Magillicuddy, "but it's the funniest name you ever heard in all your born days. Good-by, Young Klondike. I'm going to take the grub to Mac now. If you follow me or watch me you will gain nothing by it, for I shall just sit down beside the grub and wait until you are out of the way before I make a move."

"I'll let him go this time," thought Ned. "My chance will come later on."

So he turned and joined Dick in the pilot house, telling him all that had occurred.

A little later Dick went down to the treasure room door to see how it fared with the tray of food which Ned had placed there.

The tray had vanished, and so had Mr. Magillicuddy.

About an hour later the man came up on deck carrying the tray with the empty dishes.

"Mac sends his compliments and says he is much obliged," he said, sarcastically. "He wants me to say particularly that I'm to be treated with every consideration until we get to St. Michael's. After that I shan't care a hang."

"To hear is to obey," replied Ned, taking off his hat and bowing with mock gravity. "But what is going to happen after we get to St. Michael's? Are we threatened with a loss of your delightful company then?"

"Find out!" growled Magillicuddy. "If I told you all I know, then you would know as much as I do." Thus saying, he turned and walked off along the deck.

Now, here was a delightful situation for Young Klondike and his friends.

In some respects it was one of the most trying in which he had ever found himself placed, for he felt grave fears for the life of his old friend.

Two days passed and brought no change.

Magillicuddy handled himself in exactly the same way and one would have supposed that he owned the Ice Witch and all on board.

There was nothing sociable about the man. He seemed to have a surly, discontented disposition, and Ned made no headway in trying to bring him to terms.

Everybody on the yacht kept a sharp eye on him, hoping to see him remove the tray which was placed in the same position for every meal, but no one could catch him at it.

Finding that there was no help for it, Ned tried to

bribe him to reveal the secret of the Unknown's whereabouts.

He offered to interfere with the Unknown to have him set free and to pay him a handsome sum in gold into the bargain.

But to all of this Magillicuddy only laughed, and as the days went on not one ray of light was thrown upon the mystery of the two Macs.

CHAPTER VI.

THE NIGHT OF THE GREAT STORM.

FORT CUDAHY was passed and Forty Mile was left behind, and still the Ice Witch kept on her way down the Yukon and no change in the situation occurred.

One evening Ned, Dick and Edith were all sitting in the pilot house when the man Magillicuddy came along the deck and called out:

"Say, boss, are you blind? Don't you see there's trouble ahead."

Ned thrust his head out of the pilot house window, and peered down the Yukon.

It was rather a dark night; all the afternoon clouds had been gathering. The air was cold and damp, yet it was not cold enough for snow.

"What's the matter?" asked Ned. "I don't understand what you mean."

"Can't you see anything?"

"No; nothing unusual. Speak out man, if you have anything to say."

"Don't you see that white line across the river away down there? I can see it plain enough down here where I am. Don't understand how you can fail to see it up there."

"By thunder! I do see it!" cried Ned. "Look, Dick! Look, Edith!"

"Ice!" exclaimed Dick.

"That's what!" said Magillicuddy. "We are not going to have open water here much longer, my dear friends."

Ned was greatly disturbed.

Every creek they had passed during that day was frozen solid, but as there was no sign of ice in the river, Young Klondike had begun to hope that they might have open water all the way to St. Michael's. Now, however, it would appear that this was not to be so.

Ned watched the white line for a little while, and then exclaimed: "We shall have to tie up here inside of half an hour, and a mighty bad place it is for a tie up, too."

"The very wildest part of the river, is it not?" asked Edith.

"That's just what it is," replied Ned. "There is no settlement anywhere around here, not even a mining camp. Still there is nothing to be worried about."

"I hope you are well provisioned, Young Klondike," called Magillicuddy, from the deck.

"That's all right," answered Ned. "I'll engage that you shan't go hungry this trip, my good friend."

"Oh, I don't care so much about myself. It's my dear friend, Mac, I'm thinking of."

"If you are worrying so much about him why don't you set him free?" asked Edith. "If there is going to be trouble about ice we shall need his help."

"No!" growled Magillicuddy, and he walked off to the galley and went in.

"There he goes talking to Henri again," said Dick. "He is always talking to him. I begin to think Henri knows more than he cares to tell."

"I've thought that for some time," said Edith. "I've been keeping an eye on Master Henri."

"He certainly seems to have a lot of business with Henri," said Dick. "Ned, your scheme is not working well. We are no wiser than when you began it and I feel afraid that poor Zed is having a mighty hard time."

"I don't know what more we can do," replied Ned. "To pitch in and make a prisoner of that fellow would be easy enough, but what would it amount to? If he didn't choose to tell that wouldn't make him. He knows we don't dare to do him any serious injury for fear that his secret might die with him. Oh, I tell you he is as shrewd as they make 'em. I never saw such a man."

"Rain!" exclaimed Edith, suddenly, as some great drops came splashing against the window of the pilot house.

"I knew it was coming," said Dick. "Well, let her come; we can't do anything about it. Anyhow, it will help to break up the ice."

So the Ice Witch moved on toward the mysterious white line.

It was further off than they had supposed it to be. As they continued to advance the ice seemed to recede before them.

"That means it is floating ice, and that we are going at about the same rate of speed at which it is moving," declared Ned.

"If it rains hard I suppose we shall have all the creeks breaking up, and a lot of loose ice coming down the river after us," remarked Edith.

"That's what it will be," said Ned, "and we have got to take good care we don't get mixed up in it. Remember, it is not so late in the season that a freeze is impossible. It would be a bad job if the Ice Witch was to get frozen in."

"I suppose you wouldn't hear to tying up alongside the bank until morning?" suggested Edith.

"Indeed, I wouldn't," said Ned. "I'm not stopping so long as there is open water enough to float the Ice Witch. I am only too anxious to get to open water so that something may be done about the Unknown. I'll pull the whole yacht to pieces, but I'll find him—that's me."

Edith sighed. She knew perfectly well that Ned

had made a most thorough examination of the yacht in every part. As the Ice Witch had been specially built for them, and under Ned's eye all the time, it did seem impossible that there could be any secret hiding place about it. Indeed, during this last day, Ned had become quite discouraged, and was almost inclined to come to the opinion which Dick had held from the start. But this was almost too sad to think about, for Dick persisted in saying that the Unknown must have been killed and thrown overboard that first night.

It was raining in torrents when Edith went to her stateroom and locked herself in, shooting a heavy bolt on the door as well, for Magillicuddy slept on a lounge in the after cabin, which fact caused Ned so much uneasiness that he hadn't had one good hour's solid sleep since the Ice Witch sailed away from Dawson.

That night he and Dick determined not to turn in at all, but both remained in the pilot house.

Magillicuddy was up and around as late as ten o'clock, after which he went to sleep on his lounge.

The storm had now increased into a perfect gale, the rain was coming down in torrents, beating against the glass in the pilot house, so that Ned could scarcely see how to steer, while the wind lashed the usually quiet waters of the Yukon with such fury that the Ice Witch was tumbled about as badly as if she had been out at sea.

"It's a wild night, Ned," remarked Dick, coming up from the cabin about half past ten, Ned having sent him down to see if all was quiet there.

"It is indeed, Dick. How is everything—all right?"

"Yes. Magillicuddy is asleep and snoring. Confound that fellow! I believe he has murdered the Unknown."

"Hush, Dick! Don't suggest it. I still hope."

"I'm trying to, Ned, but I find it mighty hard work."

"Did you go into the engine room?"

"Yes."

"Robbins is still there."

"Yes; he says Farrell won't come on till midnight. He thinks we ought to tie up."

"I don't care what he thinks. I'm not going to tie up till I have to. There is one thing we must remember, Dick, we have got a big load of gold on board here and the sooner we get it safe to Juneau the better. I don't want to take any chances with it, and it seems to me that our greatest chance for safety lies in pushing ahead as fast as we possibly can. Now, Dick, you take the wheel. I'm going out on deck."

"What for?"

"To try once more to see if nothing can be discovered about the Unknown."

"Why now, Ned? It isn't likely you can make any discovery in all this storm with Magillicuddy asleep."

"Let me try," said Ned. "I've got an idea."

Dick pressed him further to tell, but Ned only smiled and turning over the wheel to his partner went out into the storm.

When he shut the pilot house door the wind almost swept him off his feet.

"I can't see where I'm steering, with this window shut!" shouted Dick; "the wind blows the rain against the glass so that I might as well be looking against a stone wall."

"You'll have to open it then and take your wetting," called Ned.

When Dick dropped the sash he saw Ned making toward the galley. "Look out for yourself, old man!" he called.

The wind blew so that Ned did not catch these words. He pushed on toward the galley where Henri the steward slept, and cautiously opened the door.

It was not dark in the galley, as one might have expected it to be with Henri asleep in his hammock, and that was where he was supposed to be then.

There was one ray of light which came out through the half open closet door.

Ned had caught sight of this feeble illumination through the pilot house window, and it was that which had sent him here to investigate. He was more than ever puzzled now, for he supposed the closet to be but a small affair, hardly large enough for a man to get into, and as the hammock was empty this was evidently where Henri had gone.

Ned's heart beat wildly as he drew his revolver and stole across the floor toward the closet.

He felt that he was on the verge of a great discovery.

Opening the door with the greatest caution, he saw, to his amazement, that the floor of the closet was nothing but a trapdoor, and that this was raised and the light was shining below.

"Treachery!" muttered Young Klondike. "There is a secret room in my own yacht and I never knew it. How could that possibly have come about?"

There was no one to answer his thoughts, for when he looked down through the trapdoor Ned could see nothing but a short ladder and a faint glimmer of light in the distance.

Evidently Henri had gone down into the secret retreat, and the tossing of the Ice Witch had thrown open the door which he supposed to be securely fastened. It was Ned's chance to solve the mystery, and he boldly crept down the ladder to find himself in a passage so narrow that he had to edge along sideways. He saw at once that he was going toward the treasure room, and he began to suspect what all this meant.

The passage had been built by Young Klondike's own order. Thinking that in case of a storm the heavy boxes of gold might shift and damage the yacht's timbering Ned had given directions to build a false siding to the treasure room all around, so in case of accident no damage could come.

Ned crept stealthily on, coming in a moment in sight of Mr. Henri in the act of pulling a box of gold through an open panel leading into the treasure room.

Part of the secret was now out. Ned, as he

sprang forward then, never doubted that the Unknown had been taken out of the treasure room through this self same panel.

"Ah, you scoundrel! I'm on to you now!" he shouted. "Throw up your hands unless——"

The sentence was never finished. Suddenly Henri dropped his hold on the box, and springing upon Ned, dashed the revolver down.

A brief but terrible struggle followed. Henri was a large man and as strong as an ox. Unfortunately for Ned he got him by the throat, but even then Young Klondike might have been able to hold his own if it had not happened that just then the Ice Witch gave a terrible lurch.

Down went Ned, with Henri on top of him. His head struck the timbers with a terrible force and consciousness left him.

"This settles it," muttered Henri, picking himself up. "Young Klondike, your day is done. If you had kept quiet and minded your own business until we reached St. Michaels it might have been different, but now you and the Ice Witch will have to part company. Come along."

He stooped down and picked up Ned as easily as he lifted the box of gold.

Running along sideways, he managed to get his burden to the ladder and up into the galley.

"I must watch and see what the other one is about first," he muttered. "I don't think he will come to for a minute now." Thus saying Henri stole toward the door and looked out upon the storm.

Meanwhile, Dick was doing his best to steer the Ice Witch down the Yukon with the rain beating in his face. It was indeed an awful night. It took all Dick's attention to watch the dark outlines of the river's bank, and to make sure that he kept the yacht in midstream.

Still he did find the chance to look at the galley once in awhile, for although he did not feel sure that Ned had entered there, not having seen him, he thought there was little doubt about it. Looking back thus, he suddenly saw the door open and Henri come staggering out carrying in his arms a dark form, which he threw over the rail into the river.

"Hey! Hey! What are you about?" yelled Dick, wild with terror.

Henri, who had started to return into the galley, suddenly bounced out again.

Whipping out a revolver he fired point blank at the pilot house, the shot passing within a few inches of Dick's head.

CHAPTER VII.

FAST IN THE ICE.

Dick dropped the wheel and leaving the Ice Witch to the mercy of the wind bounded out of the pilot house without a second's delay.

Henri saw him coming, and rushed into the galley. Dick, who was quite as fearless as Ned, when once aroused ran in after him, but only to find the galley deserted, for Henri had time to get into the closet and shut the door.

Poor Dick was mystified. Ned was not there. Henri had vanished before his eyes, so to speak. Still he thought of the closet and flung open the door, but without making any discovery, for the trapdoor was not open now.

"It was Ned who went overboard!" he gasped. "It must have been! I'm sure I made no mistake."

He bent over the yacht's rail and peered off into the night.

Reckless proceeding! Dick little dreamed that the Unknown's man—that terrible man who had caused them so much trouble—aroused by the shot had come on deck, and was even then lurking behind the galley, watching his chance for some desperate deed.

He knew it a moment later, however, for all at once his legs were seized, and before he knew where he was at, over the rail he went.

"That settles you both!" cried Magillicuddy. "Come out, Henri; we own the yacht now. We'll divide the gold between us. We'll have old Mac up on deck and pitch him over, too."

And the Ice Witch shot off into the darkness and storm, leaving Ned and Dick struggling for their lives in the icy waters of the Yukon.

It was a fortunate thing that both these boys were good swimmers, or their lives would not have been worth a rush that night.

As for Young Klondike, he was particularly expert in the water, as he had proved on more than one occasion since he came to the gold country. If it had been otherwise his chances would not have been worth a rush.

And perhaps under the circumstances it was just as well that Henri took this means of finishing up Ned, for he could easily have shot him or stabbed him if he had chosen to do it that way.

As it was, the sudden plunge into the Yukon, where the temperature of the water was only a little over forty degrees, served to instantly restore Ned to his senses and he struck out as naturally as a duck, swimming before he fairly realized where he was or what had actually occurred.

It was pitch dark except for the lights of the Ice Witch. Ned thought of Edith, but he did not let the thought make him a bit less cool and collected.

"I can easily save myself by swimming to the shore any time," he reflected, "but if there is any possible chance of getting back on the yacht that is what I want."

But was there any chance?

The prospect of it was certainly pretty slim, and Ned might well have abandoned all hope of such a thing, but just then, in peering forward over the water, he saw that long, low line of white right ahead of the lights of the yacht.

"The ice! She is close upon it!" he thought. "Oh, if I could only make Dick hear."

He shouted and shouted, but of course his voice was swept away by the wind. Then, as he looked ahead, he suddenly saw Dick leaning over the rail and in the next second Magillicuddy came up behind him and tumbled poor Dick overboard.

Dick went head under without a cry, while Ned struck out more strongly to be near him when he rose.

As luck would have it Dick came up right alongside of him, puffing and blowing and Ned's arm was about him in an instant.

"Hold hard, old man!" he exclaimed. "I'm here to help you!"

"Oh, Ned!" Dick gasped. "Thank Heaven you are all right."

"And you? Hurt in any way, Dick?"

"Not a bit of it! I can stand the cold water as well as anyone. Oh, that scoundrel! Ned, your plan has been a dismal failure!"

"Right you are! We'll pull out of this, though."

"The worst is Edith, Ned."

"Don't you fret. Edith will be able to hold her own. I'll back her against Magillicuddy any day in the week. She has three revolvers and there's Dan Robbins and Fred Farrell to help her. There's only Magillicuddy and that traitor Henri against them."

"Then Henri is a traitor?"

"Sure! I know all now, Dick."

"Did you find the Unknown?"

"No, but I found the secret hiding place. I believe I would have found Zed, too, if I had been given a few moments more."

The boys were swimming as they talked and they kept it up as coolly as though the situation was nothing unusual. Ned told all that had happened to him. Little by little they drew nearer the line of the ice.

"The Ice Witch has stopped!" exclaimed Ned after a little. "She must have run against the ice."

"That's what," said Dick. "I can see that she is no longer moving. We shall be on the ice in a few moments now."

"It extends clean across the river!" exclaimed Ned, peering forward as best he could. "It's a regular blockade, Dick, and there is no telling how long it may last. How are you feeling, old man?"

"Cold, but no sign of cramp, thank goodness! How is it with you?"

"The same. Hark! Wasn't that a shot?"

"You bet! There goes another!"

"It's on board the Ice Witch. Trouble is beginning."

"You take it coolly, Ned. If Edith was my wife——"

"Well, what would you do if she was? You know Edith. She's the best shot in Alaska, and a dozen Magillicuddys could not scare her. Dick, I'd trust that girl as I would myself."

"Yes, but the Unknown's man got the best of you," sighed Dick, "and here's another. That's

what makes me feel—— Hello! here's the ice right ahead of us at last!"

They had come upon it unexpectedly, although watching out for it all the while.

It seemed to be a spur of the main ice field which they had struck, and the boys immediately started to climb out upon it. Again and again the ice broke under them, and for a time it seemed as if none of it was solid enough to bear them, but at last they managed to crawl up upon it, and stood there shivering in their wet clothes.

The yacht had struck the barrier at some distance further down the river, being nearer the north bank and so avoiding the spur. To reach it as much as half a mile of ice would have to be covered.

With their wet clothes clinging to them, and shivering in the cold, pelting rain which every moment threatened to break up the ice under their feet, the boys made the best of their way toward the lights of the Ice Witch.

Long before this the firing had ceased, and there was nothing to break the stillness except the howling of the wind and the pattering of the rain upon the frozen river.

"Faster! Faster!" cried Ned. "Now that I am actually out of the water I want to fly to Edith's assistance. Oh, Dick, I'm getting your scare on me now. Is Edith still alive?"

"Don't worry, Ned. It will come out all right in the end, old man."

"Let us hope so. I've been trying to make myself believe so. Look! Look! What's that?"

"A light coming over the side of the Ice Witch, as true as you live!"

"That's what it is! Some one is coming out to look for us. The Ice Witch is fast in the ice."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BEGINNING OF THE GREAT FLOOD.

It was a tough situation for Young Klondike and Dick, and no mistake.

There was no possible way of telling whether the person who now flashed the lantern across the ice field was friend or foe.

"There is only one," said Ned, at last. "Get out your revolver, Dick. We ought to be good for either Magillicuddy or Henri."

"My revolver is so wet that I don't believe it will go off," groaned Dick.

"Never fear! You can't spoil those cartridges. I'll bank on mine every time, and yours are just the same."

"I can see the fellow now. He's too small a man for Magillicuddy."

"Yes, and for Henri also. It's neither one nor the other."

They walked on for a few moments in silence

Meanwhile the man with the lantern continued to steadily advance.

Suddenly Ned gave a great cry, and started forward on the run.

"Oh, Dick! Hurry! Hurry!" he exclaimed. "It's the Unknown!"

"That's who it is, by gracious," shouted Dick, and on they dashed, coming up to the detective a few moments later.

He heard their shouts, and began waving his lantern wildly.

"Hooray for Edith!" he shouted. "Hooray for our side! By the Jumping Jeremiah, she's the bravest girl in the Klondike! She has captured my man!"

"What did I tell you, Dick!" panted Ned, as they ran up to the Unknown, who began shaking hands frantically.

The little detective was fairly wild with the joy of the meeting.

He talked so fast that the boys could scarcely make out what he was saying.

"Oh, it's all Edith! It's all Edith!" he exclaimed. "Bless that girl, she has saved my life again. I only wish she wasn't rich. I'd like to give her half a million. Hurry up, boys! Magillicuddy is a prisoner and so is Henri. Trouble is all over—no, it isn't, though. The Ice Witch is stuck and I don't know as she'll ever get free unless this rain holds. Ye gods and little fishes! I wish it would pour cats and dogs from now until morning and break this jam all to pieces. I've no doubt there is plenty of open water lower down."

"Do hold your horses, Zed, and try and give us some connected account of it all," said Ned. "How did Edith get around the situation; we want to know?"

"How? Why, it was intuition, I guess. She didn't hear anything from you and she woke up and couldn't go to sleep again, so she thought she would go on deck and see what had become of you. Just as she was starting out she heard voices in the cabin. It was Magillicuddy and Henri. She listened to their talk and so learned what had happened, and then out she jumped, with a revolver in each hand, and fired several shots, holding those two scoundrels up in the neatest way possible, and would you believe it, she actually made Henri tie up Magillicuddy and then she marched him down into the engine room to Dan Robbins at the point of the pistol. As soon as Dan got over his astonishment he tied up Henri and then they made him tell where I was."

"I knew Edith would be good for them," said Ned, triumphantly; "of course you were in that place between the treasure room and the side of the yacht, Zed?"

"Of course. You were within ten feet of me, Ned, but I couldn't holler to let you know, for I had a big handkerchief jammed in my mouth. Oh, how I have suffered! But, no matter about that. It was all my own fault. I deserve to be kicked for letting it hap-

pen. Who would ever have supposed that in building that compartment you were building a prison for me?"

"Not I, that's sure," said Ned; "but tell us how it happened?"

"Why, in the kindness of my heart I set the fellow free and he jumped on me—that's all!" replied the Unknown. "Magillicuddy is as strong as an ox and he turned the tables on me before I knew where I was at. Then along came Henri and opened that secret panel, and the next I knew I was in prison."

"Yes; but, Zed, we didn't order that secret panel made, nor the trapdoor from the galley, either. That place was all sealed up."

"I know it. How do you suppose that came about, boys?"

"That's just what I've been wondering," said Dick. "I can't see through it at all."

"Well, then, you'll be able to see clean through it and out on the other side when I tell you that Henri was one of the carpenters who built the yacht."

"You don't mean it!" cried Ned.

"Indeed I do."

"But I have no recollection of him or anyone bearing the least resemblance to him."

"No? Remember the man with the big black beard?"

"Yes."

"That was Henri. He shaved it off before he engaged with us as cook."

"I see it all now; but his motive? Surely he could not have known your man?"

"No; he didn't know him, of course. His idea was simply to help himself to the gold in the treasure room. That's why he built those two secret doors. Well, he came into the treasure room and got acquainted with my man; at first he refused to have anything to do with him, but in the end he promised to help him. He was on the way down to set him free, just at the time I did it for him, and was captured for my pains. Now then, boys, you know the whole story, and here we are close to the yacht. Won't Edith be wild with joy when she finds that I have brought you back with me! I tell you plain we had mighty little hope of finding you, but here we are. Edith! Edith! Oh, Edith! Where is the girl?"

Suddenly the pilot house door was thrown open, and out sprang Edith to welcome them back.

We pass over the joyful meeting. The remainder of the night was passed comfortably in the cabin, for the yacht was hard and fast in the ice, and nothing was to be done.

Magillicuddy and Henri were now prisoners in the treasure room, but there was no danger of their breaking out a second time, as the secret doors were carefully nailed up.

Again and again, before morning, Ned went on deck to study the situation, but as the night advanced there came no change. At one time Ned thought that the whole body of ice was moving; again he

would come to the conclusion that it was firm from shore to shore.

Toward morning—it was just before daylight—he went on deck again and suddenly they heard him shout for all hands to come up.

“What is it!” cried Dick, who was first out of the companion way.

“Flood!” cried Ned. “The river is rising with frightful rapidity. It will carry us over on top of the ice next.”

“It will break the ice up and set us free—that’s what,” said the Unknown.

“No; I don’t think it. Still it may. We must be prepared for the worst.”

“What makes the river rise so?” asked Edith. “Of course, I know the rain is at the bottom of it, but all the rain that has fallen since the storm began isn’t enough to make the river rise at the rate it is rising now.”

“Certainly not,” said the Unknown. “It’s the breaking up of the ice in the small creeks which flow into the Yukon all along its line, the water is forcing its way out underneath the ice, and the next we know the ice itself will begin to come down.”

“Zed is quite right,” said Young Klondike. “We are going to have a great old time of it in my way of thinking. If the yacht is not thrown up on the ice field, it will be so jammed in by the float ice from the creeks, that there will be no such thing as getting out of this scrape until the final breaking up of the river. We may be stuck here for days to come.”

It was, indeed, a serious situation. The water continued to rise, forcing the ice up in great mounds in places, but the main sheet was securely anchored between the banks and remained firm.

Shortly after daylight, while Ned was looking back up the river, he perceived a great tumbling mass of white cakes sweeping down the Yukon toward the Ice Witch.

The fun was just beginning; torn out of a hundred creeks, large and small, by the rise of the water, this ice was soon jammed in against the main field and banked up against the yacht, coming against it with a force which threatened to crush the sides in.

When the rain ceased to fall, as it did about nine o’clock, Young Klondike’s little party found themselves hopeless prisoners, and worse than all, it was now entirely impossible to reach the shore in case anything serious should happen to the yacht, for the great masses of loose ice forced up on the field broke it in every direction, opening channels here and there, many being too wide to cross and liable to be closed again at any instant by some big cake lodging between the walls.

“All that’s wanted now is a freeze to make us prisoners here indefinitely,” remarked Ned.

The words proved to be almost a prophecy, for as night came on it began to grow colder, and by twelve o’clock it was almost down to zero.

Still the river kept rising. Ned could not understand it. He did not stop to reflect that further up

it was unquestionably warmer, and that the water was working down into the Yukon from a thousand hills.

The rise of the water forced the ice cakes against the sides of the yacht with ever increasing force.

The timbers, stout as they were, creaked and groaned ominously.

“It’s only the beginning of a great flood,” declared the Unknown. “Where will the end be? What is going to happen to us before this night has passed?”

What indeed?

Young Klondike was not able to answer the question.

All through the small hours of the night he paced the deck, expecting every moment to see the sides of the Ice Witch crushed in, which would have meant nothing short of death to all on board.

CHAPTER IX.

THE UNKNOWN TELLS HIS NAME AT LAST.

It was a fearful night—never since his arrival in the Klondike country had Ned Golden experienced anything to equal it, but it came to an end at last.

Morning found the yacht perched on top of a pinnacle of ice cakes high up above the surface of the river and that was a good six feet higher than it was when they first became entangled in the ice.

“Well, here we are, and here we are likely to stay for awhile, it seems to me,” remarked the Unknown as he came on deck after a brief sleep. “Is the river still on the rise, Ned?”

“I don’t think so,” replied Ned. “My idea is that the flood has reached its highest point.”

“You may be right; I hope we have.”

“It will be a bad job if we haven’t; if we are set up any further I don’t see what is to prevent us from toppling over. That will be the next thing on the programme, sure.”

“Do you think so?”

“I do. See, we are only kept from it now by these two big ice cakes, one on each side of our hull.”

“By the Jumping Jeremiah, yes! And either one of them is liable to go at any moment. I don’t like this over much. What’s to be done?”

“Breakfast ready, boys!” called Edith, looking out of the galley where she had taken the place of Henry.

“We’ll eat breakfast first and discuss the situation afterward,” said Ned. “You and Dick go down and have yours with Edith. I’ll remain here on the watch, for there is no telling what the next change in the situation may be.”

Soon Dick relieved Ned, and while he was eating with Dan Robbins, the engineer, the Unknown took breakfast into the treasure room to the prisoners.

A little later all hands found themselves once more on deck watching the movement of the ice.

There could be no doubt that the flood had reached its height.

There was the most terrible uproar all over the ice field now. In every direction the big cakes were creaking and groaning as the rushing water beneath forced them against each other, and every now and then there would come a great crash, and some big cake, broken into a thousand fragments by the pressure, would go whirling down upon the field ice.

Ned watched it all with the closest attention, and he soon perceived that the hummocks were beginning to collapse.

Some went down gently, others fell all to pieces with a thunderous noise, the big cakes crashing and smashing, and the pieces scattering in every direction. The hummock upon which the Ice Witch was perched still remained firm, but Ned knew that its time must soon come.

If they could have abandoned the yacht with any chance of reaching the bank of the river on either side, Young Klondike would have done it then, even with the prospect of sacrificing the gold and finding his party stranded in a country practically unexplored, or to tell the truth he had no hope that their lives would be spared.

But there was no such chance. Practically there was no longer any field ice. The great cakes had broken it in every direction; long before this Ned made the discovery that the whole mass was on the move.

To cross to the shore could only be accomplished at the risk of their lives, and they ran no greater risk in remaining by the Ice Witch.

At last the crisis came, and with a report like a cannon, the great hummock parted.

"Oh Ned! We are lost!" cried Edith.

Ned flung his arms about her. Dick and the Unknown grabbed the rail and held on for dear life, and the Ice Witch went down between the parting cakes and landed in the open water—safe!

Oh, what a cheering there was then.

"We are all right now," declared Ned. "This is the beginning of the end. We may be held in here for a few hours, but the ice is on the break up, and before morning we are going to see clear water all the way to St. Michaels or I miss my guess."

"See that moose?" cried Edith, suddenly, pointing off on the ice.

There sure enough was a big moose running about wildly. It was strange that they had not seen him before, but the animal was considerably behind the Ice Witch, and our friends had been looking ahead.

"We ought to have him," said Ned. "We are in great need of fresh meat. I should think we might safely venture out on the cakes now."

"Not on your life! I don't go without a boat," declared the Unknown.

"It will be rather difficult to launch a boat just

yet," said Dick, "but if this break up continues, it won't be long before we can do it, I should say."

For an hour or more they continued to watch the moose. It was evidently a prisoner on some big ice cake, and it was equally plain that the ice cake had lodged and was not on the move.

But as the morning advanced this changed. The gradual movement of the whole mass of ice increased, and by eleven o'clock it was running pretty fast. Ned knew that before long they would come to a point on the Yukon where the river widened out considerably, and he had strong hopes that then they would be able to start their engine again.

At last the ice suddenly parted and clear water, some six feet wide, was alongside of the yacht.

The ice cake on which the moose was now began to move toward this stream, and all saw that within a few moments it would probably pass the yacht.

At least this appeared to be the programme then, but a few moments later it moved abruptly to the left, and Ned saw that another stream had formed beyond a particularly large ice cake which was then sailing alongside the open water nearest the yacht.

"I'm going for that moose!" he cried. "Zed, you come with me. We shall lose it if we don't make a move right away."

"By the Jumping Jeremiah, I'm with you, dear boy!" cried the Unknown; "that ice cake is safe enough. If we can run across it we can easily head the other off."

Dick would have liked to go also, but as some one had to stay behind with Edith, he said nothing about it, and helped Ned and the Unknown to lower the boat.

Taking their rifles with them, they pulled across to the ice cake, into which Ned drove a big iron pin, and to this made the boat fast.

"We are just in time!" he exclaimed. "Now for a run!"

And off they started over the ice, Ned taking with him the boat hook, thinking that it might be needed.

Now when it came to a run, short as the Unknown's legs were, he could always distance his companions.

He seemed to be in particularly good condition this morning, and soon left Ned well in the rear.

Seeing that there was no chance of overtaking him Young Klondike made a turn and struck across the ice lower down, so that in case the Unknown missed the moose, as he was very liable to do, not being a particularly good shot, he could take the animal lower down the stream.

As he reached the open water he looked up stream and saw the Unknown suddenly give a spring over upon the ice cake upon which the moose was running about.

"The fool!" gasped Ned. "What's he thinking about? If he misses now he is liable to get a toss with those big horns which will send him to kingdom come."

It was just at this moment that the detective fired.

As was very often the case with the Unknown the shot was a miss.

Instantly the moose turned and made a rush for him. The next Ned saw was the little detective flying one way and his rifle another.

Down came the Unknown upon his back, while his rifle went into the water. Meanwhile, the cake was sailing on and was now almost opposite the yacht.

"I can get a shot there, Ned," cried Edith, from the deck. "Stop the ice cake with your boat hook. I can kill the moose."

"Do it, Edith," shouted Ned, and he flung aside his rifle, and with the boat hook stood ready to head off the cake.

By this time the Unknown had regained his feet, and was trying for a chance to jump over on the larger cake.

The moose lowered his horns and prepared for business.

Just as Young Klondike caught the ice cake the moose made a rush for the Unknown, butting him furiously.

"By the Jumping Jeremiah, I'm a goner!" gasped the detective, falling backward into the Yukon.

And so he would have been if Young Klondike had not acted with all promptness.

The Unknown was a poor swimmer and Ned lost no time in plunging in after him.

At the same instant Edith's rifle cracked.

The moose made one great bound, clearing the open water and falling dead upon the larger ice cake upon which Ned soon succeeded in dragging the Unknown.

"Oh, oh, oh! I'm a dying man!" groaned the detective. "My back is broken! My ribs are all smashed in!"

"It can hardly be both," said Ned, soothingly. "Brace up, old man! We must make the yacht somehow. Anyway we've got the moose!"

"Confound the moose," groaned the detective. "I wish its mother had never been born! Oh, Ned, Ned, I can't stand on my feet. Let me go. I'll die right here on the ice, as sure as my name is McJee!"

"What!" cried Ned. "Look here, you've given yourself every name in the directory, I truly believe, but I never heard that one before. Can it be possible that your name is really McJee?"

"By the Jumping Jeremiah! I don't know whether I've got any name or not!" groaned the detective. "I only know that I'm dying. If you have any regard for me at all, dear boy, get me back to the Ice Witch as soon as ever you can."

This was just what Ned was trying to do, and in the end he succeeded.

He almost had to carry the Unknown to the boat, and when they crossed to the yacht, it was all he and Dick could do to get him aboard.

"I'll go over there and get the moose, boss," said Fred Farrell, the fireman, who had come on deck to see the fun.

"I wish you would," replied Ned. "I want to take Mr. McJee down into the cabin and see what can be done for him right away."

Then to Ned's surprise the Unknown suddenly pulled away, and straightening up, began to parade about the deck.

"Hello!" cried Young Klondike. "Not so much hurt after all, it seems."

"No," said the Unknown; "it was only a stitch on the side. It's gone now. I'm wet to the skin, and mighty lame and sore where the moose's horns got their fine work, but I'm not a dead man by a good deal. Go after the moose if you want to; I can take care of myself now."

But Farrell had already started, and Ned let him go.

"I'm thankful that you are all right, Ned," said Edith, pityingly.

"Huh! don't say a word. Edith, I do believe that I never yet started to get in a shot but what you came in ahead of me. It reminds me of the time when I was hunting lions in Africa. I——"

"Time!" cried Dick.

"Cheese it!" shouted Ned.

"Oh, he's all right now," laughed Edith. "When Zed begins to tell his big stories I no longer fear for him; but, Ned, what did you mean by calling him Mr. McJee?"

"Yes," cried Dick, "I noticed that. We have called the Unknown every name under the sun, but this is a new one altogether."

"I called him McJee because he called himself McJee," replied Ned, seriously; "and, do you know, I believe that at last the Unknown forgot himself and that he actually called himself by his true name."

The Unknown continued to pace the deck and never said a word, although he must have heard.

"How is that, Zed?" demanded Edith. "Has Ned hit the truth?"

"Bah! Bother! Ye gods and little fishes, can you let a fellow alone?" the detective growled.

"You must really excuse him," said Dick, laughing. "A man who don't know a stitch in the sheet from his death agonies can't be expected to know his name."

"But I know mine all right, Richard!" cried the detective, suddenly stopping and turning upon them. "I not only know it, but just to spite you I'm going to tell it. My name is——"

"What?" they all cried in a breath. "Are you really going to tell your name?"

"Yes; honest Injun. I really am, boys. I always said I would when I caught my man, and now I've got him hard and fast. My name is——"

"What? What?" cried Young Klondike. "Let her come, Zed—don't be afraid!"

"Zedekiah, Obediah, Jeremiah McJee!" shouted the Unknown, and then he bounced down into the cabin and disappeared.

CHAPTER X.

THE WRECK OF THE ICE WITCH.

"WHAT nonsense!" laughed Dick. "Was there ever such a comical fellow as the Unknown. Of course no man living ever had such a name as that."

"I don't know," replied Ned. "I remember when I was a little fellow there was a boy who lived near the place named George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Andrew Jackson Smith."

"Ned! Ned! Be careful!" cried Edith. "The Unknown's complaint is catching, you'll have it bad if you don't look out."

"It's a fact, Edith. There really was such a boy, and I must say I believe the Unknown has actually told us his name."

"Go change your wet clothes before you get your death of cold," said Edith. "Dick and I will look after the yacht. I believe it is all going to be plain sailing now."

"It may be plain sailing, but if we have another good there's going to be great danger when we get down to the Devil's Canyon," replied Ned. "However, we have twenty-four hours ahead of us yet, so there's no use worrying about it."

Ned hurried down to his stateroom and soon returned with a dry suit on and took the wheel, for by this time the Ice Witch had made a start.

"This is fine!" he cried. "I could have danced a jig just out of joy when I felt the propeller begin to turn. How came you to start up, Dick?"

"Well, you see for yourself that it is all open water in ahead," replied Dick, "so I thought we might as well get a move on the Ice Witch. You see how slick we are going ahead. I shouldn't wonder if we found ourselves in open water within an hour's time."

"No," said the Unknown, coming into the pilot house at this moment, "there's too much ice behind us for that, boys. We haven't seen the last of it yet by a good deal. If we keep on moving at this speed we go faster than the ice, and of course we have got to wait for it to melt before we do see the last of it. I don't want to find any fault, but I think it is a mistake to start now. The very best thing we can do is to lie up somewhere until morning, and let the ice run down ahead of us. Then we stand a fair chance of having clear water all the way."

"I guess you are about right," said Ned, "but it can't do any harm to run ahead a little and see how far this open water extends."

"Perhaps not."

"Then let us do it, Mr. McJee. We'll tie up for the night if you say the word."

"Right you are, Mr. Golden. Oh, how much better you must all feel now that you actually know my name."

"Do we?" asked Dick.

"Are you sure we do, Zed?" laughed Edith.

"Yes," said the detective, seriously, "you do. I

have actually told you my name. Isn't it an absurd one? Do you wonder that I kept it concealed?"

"Oh, it might be worse," said Ned, "but what made you keep it back?"

"Just for fun. Of course, I never tell anyone my full name, but there was no reason for keeping back the McJee excepting that. You boys seemed very anxious to know my name when I first met you, and just to bother you a bit I wouldn't tell it. After that it got to be a joke between us and I kept it up, but now that we are actually going home it is time the secret came out."

"I should think you would change it," said Edith.

"No," replied the Unknown. "I won't do that. My father was an honest Scotchman, and if McJee was good enough for him I'm sure it is for me. As for my mother she was a good soul and it pleased her to give me scripture names, so why should I go back on her and let them drop at this late day? No, boys. I was christened Zedekiah, Obediah, Jeremiah McJee, and that must be my name until I die."

So the great mystery of the Unknown's name turned out to be a very small mystery in the end.

Of course the discovery could make no difference to the boys and Edith.

Zed, and the Unknown, the detective had always been to them, and such he would have to remain until they parted company. Meanwhile, the Ice Witch continued on down the Yukon.

The ice remained about the same until sundown. It was all broken up and on the move, but more than once the yacht found herself so wedged in between the cakes, that Dan Robbins had to stop his engine. Then the force of the current would loosen up things again, and another move of a few miles would be made, when the same experience was repeated.

It was evident that they were keeping well ahead of the broken ice out of the creeks, and Ned concluded to take the Unknown's advice and tie up for the night.

A safe cove was found, and the Ice Witch was securely tied to a tree.

That evening, in the cabin, was one of the most enjoyable our friends had passed since they left Dawson City. Dan Robbins and Fred Farrell came in by Ned's invitation and joined them.

Edith sang her sweetest songs to the accompaniment of Ned's banjo, and the Unknown had more comical stories than ever to tell, and the strange part of it was all were brand new ones. At last, about ten o'clock, the detective took the watch and kept guard until midnight, when Dick relieved him. There was no alarm, and when morning dawned and Ned went on deck, he found the river clear of ice as far as he could see, but the rain was falling in torrents still.

"If this keeps up we are going to have higher water than ever," remarked Young Klondike. "It looks to me as if the flood had but just begun."

That morning first thing Ned went to work on the moose. The head and horns were carefully pre-

served to be put up as an ornament in the cabin. It was moose steaks for breakfast and roast moose for dinner, an agreeable change from salt provisions which they had been living on for some days past.

Through the rain the Ice Witch continued on down the river.

Young Klondike was a good pilot. He had been up and down the Yukon several times, and knew the river thoroughly.

That night they were going to tie up again, but the Unknown objected.

"Why don't we keep straight ahead while we have the chance?" he asked.

"Because I'm not feeling well to-night," replied Ned. "Although I slept all through last night, I feel tired and used up. I don't think there is anything serious the matter with me, though. Another night's sleep will fix me up all right."

"Take it, then, by all means," said the detective. "Who's hindering you, I'd like to know."

"But Dick can't keep the wheel all night when he had it half of last night. He is tired, too."

"Wait! What's the matter with your uncle? I can steer."

Ned looked doubtful. Once before the Unknown had run them into trouble with his steering, and Ned did not feel much like running any risks just now.

"You've got all you can do to take care of your prisoners," he replied, "and Dick needs his sleep."

"Oh, my prisoners are all right. Don't you fret. Magillicuddy is as meek as a lamb now."

"How does he like the prospect of being turned over to the Russian Government?"

"Ned, he don't like it a bit. Why should he? There's no fun in it for him."

"Why don't you let him go, Zed?"

"What! What! By the Jumping Jeremiah, what's this I hear?"

"Well, I've said it."

"Now, that is you all over, Young Klondike. It is lucky you didn't choose the profession of a detective, for you would make a very bad one. No, I shall not let him go."

"But why? You are rich now. What do you care for any reward the Russian Government may pay you?"

"Not a rap! You are right as far as that goes; but look here, Ned, this man is one of the greatest scoundrels that ever lived. Not only did he try to murder the Czar of Russia, but he actually has murdered as many as half a dozen men to my certain knowledge. Seriously I don't think there ever was a worse man than this same Magillicuddy, but that isn't the reason why I am determined to put this thing through."

"Name it, then."

"Because I have sworn to deliver this great criminal up to justice and whatever I undertake to do I always do if I can."

"Well, well, it's your business and not mine," said

Ned, "but what about this tie up? Shall we do it or not?"

"I say no decidedly. Now is our time and we want to make the most of it."

"You think you can do your share of running the Ice Witch through the night?"

"I do."

"Then try it, but don't fail to call me if you get an alarm."

The Unknown promised faithfully to do so. Dick came up into the pilot house a little later and when the plan was explained to him he agreed with the Unknown that it would be foolish to tie up when there was so good a chance to make a run.

And yet Ned felt not a little concerned when he turned into his bunk later, for the storm had greatly increased in fury. Never since he came to the Klondike had Ned seen anything to equal it. The wind was blowing a perfect gale and the Ice Witch was pitching and tossing about at a tremendous rate. Yet Ned felt so tired and sleepy that he concluded to let matters remain as they had been arranged for an hour or so.

"If I can just get a little sleep I'll take the wheel and stick to the pilot house till morning," he said to himself.

But once he fell asleep there was no such thing as waking up for Ned, and it is probable that he would have slept the night through if nothing had occurred to disturb him. As it was a little after twelve o'clock he was suddenly awakened by Edith.

"Ned—Ned!" she called. "Wake up, quick! Something is wrong I am sure. I think we have struck a rock!"

Ned was out of the bunk and on his feet in an instant. He had not removed his clothes, so he was ready to rush on deck.

"What's the matter, Edith?" he exclaimed. "It seems to be going straight along."

"Yes, but there was a terrible shock a few moments ago. I thought the Ice Witch would go to pieces."

"Then it's the Unknown's careless work. He must have run over against the shore. Of course, there are no rocks in the middle of the Yukon."

"You had better get up on deck at once and see for yourself. Of course you will let me know if there is anything wrong."

"Going now!" cried Ned, seizing his hat, and he made a bee line for the deck.

The wind was blowing so hard that it almost tore him off his feet, and the fury of the rain as it came sweeping against him surpassed anything he had ever witnessed. It was as black as ink all around him. He had all he could do to make the pilot house twice he was blown against the guard rail before he could reach the door.

"Oh, I'm so glad you've come!" cried the Unknown when he appeared. "I'm having an awful time of it here. I didn't dare to leave the wheel. I'd have come and called you. Did you feel that shock?"

"I didn't, but Edith did. Where are we?"

"I'm sure I don't know. I haven't been able to see a blessed thing for the last twenty minutes. Never in all my life did I see such a night."

"But what happened?"

"We ran against a rock or something. I thought the whole bow would be stove in, and perhaps it was. Does it seem to you that we are settling in the water, dear boy?"

"No, I don't think that. It couldn't have been a rock here in the middle of the Yukon."

"Then it was an ice cake, and that is just as bad. What's to be done? If I ring for Dan to stop we run the risk of being thrown against the rocks along the bank and dashed to pieces."

"You are right there, we mustn't stop. Such a thing is not to be thought of. Oh, I wish it would lighten up a bit! Here, give me the wheel, and you go out and see what you can discover."

"With the greatest of pleasure, dear boy. Here, take the blame thing! That's the talk! Never was I so glad to get rid of anything in all my life."

Ned dropped the window of the pilot house in spite of the rain which came bursting in upon him and tried to penetrate the gloom, but all he could see was the unknown clinging to the rail holding on to his hat. All at once the detective gave a wild shout. "Rocks ahead! Rocks ahead!" he cried.

"Which way shall I steer?" called Ned, desperately, for he could see nothing at all.

"To the right! No, to the left! Better keep straight ahead, though."

"Confound you, Zed, what shall I do?" Ned fairly roared in his excitement.

But it was too late now.

Suddenly the Ice Witch struck the rocks with fearful force in spite of the fact that Ned had given Dan Robbins the bell to slow down.

"By the Jumping Jeremiah, our goose is cooked!" yelled the Unknown. "There's another! Ha! Now we've got it! Ye gods and little fishes, my man and I will perish in the drink together. I could have done as well as that myself. You are taking everyone of them as they come along!"

And so, indeed, it seemed.

Ned so soon turned the Ice Witch off one rock than it struck another.

Crashing and smashing the yacht staggered on, coming to a standstill at last, wedged in between two huge boulders.

Then she keeled over on her side, throwing the Unknown off his feet and sending him rolling along the deck to be stopped by the guard rail.

The mischief was done now.

Ned groaned inwardly as he thought of the great treasure of gold which they had toiled so hard to get.

Up came Dick, and Edith was right behind him. Dan Robbins and Fred Farrell appeared a moment later. It was all that they could do to keep their footing on the slippery deck and they would not have

been able to do it at all if the Ice Witch had not righted a little.

"Where in Heaven's name have you run us to, Young Klondike?" demanded the engineer.

"Blest if I know," replied Ned. "Better stick to your post. How am I going to back out with you up here?"

"Back nothing!" growled Robbins. "The Ice Witch is a total wreck, Young Klondike, and the water is a foot deep in the engine room. You'll never back out of here."

CHAPTER XI.

ON THE FLOATING ISLAND.

THIS startling announcement instead of "rattling" Young Klondike still further, only served to make him cooler.

"Hold your horses everybody and we'll see what can be done!" he cried. "Back out of this we've got to and there is no time to lose."

"What shall I do?" demanded Dick. "Only tell me, I'm ready for anything at all."

"So am I," added the Unknown. "Don't blame Ned, boys, it's all my fault. My theory is that we are not on the Yukon at all. In some mysterious way I have run the yacht up some creek, and this is the result."

"It's more likely that we have gone into the mouth of some canyon," said Ned. "There are a lot of them along here where the river turns in and flows back for quite a way, and there's no end of rocks in the best of them. That's what has happened. Now, Dick, you get down into the engine room and be ready to answer the bells if Dan Robbins won't go."

"Oh, but Dan Robbins will go," said the engineer. "If it comes to that I am ready to perish at my post. Only thing is we are going to sink sure as soon as we pull off the rocks. Now you mark what I say."

Having thus freed his mind, the engineer started below after Dick, who had not lost an instant in obeying Ned's command.

"Look out for yourselves there, now!" said Ned. "I'm going to give him the bell to back. Edith, you had better come in here."

The Ice Witch gave a groan almost human as the force of her engines drove her back off the rocks.

"She's sinking!" cried the Unknown, instantly. "We are lost!"

"Get every lantern on board up here on deck!" called Ned. "First thing we've got to do now is to see where we are."

"That's what's the matter," said the Unknown, and accompanied by Farrell he hurried below to get the lanterns, soon returning with four which were flashed right and left over the yacht's rail.

The light showed Young Klondike land on both sides of them; a mountain on one side, and a stretch

of lowland covered with stunted trees on the other.

Ned saw at a glance that they were off their course, and had gone up some one of the numerous arms of the Yukon.

He continued to back, although the yacht was settling deeper and deeper into the water every instant.

"How far are you going?" asked Edith.

"To the mouth of this back-set if I can reach it," replied Ned, coolly.

"But we are evidently sinking."

"I know it. Don't be afraid, Edith. We can land in a few moments."

"Still we may go down all of a sudden. Remember the gold. There is a terrible load on the Ice Witch, Ned."

"I know there is. I haven't forgotten it for an instant. Steady, Edith. We'll pull out of this scrape all right."

"Hello!" cried the Unknown. "Hadn't I better get the boats ready, Ned?"

"Get your man and Henri up on deck."

"We ought to look to ourselves first, dear boy."

"Do as I tell you!" cried Ned, sternly. "If Magillicuddy is ever so many times a murderer, I'm not one. Get them up. We are going ashore."

Without making any further objection the Unknown hurried below.

"Fred Farrell, get the boats ready for immediate use!" was Ned's next order, and before the fireman had time to carry it out Dick appeared on deck followed by Dan Robbins.

"Through down there?" called Ned.

"You bet we are!" replied Dick. "The water is up to the grate bars. In five minutes the fire will be out. There's no use in staying there any longer that I can see."

"Ned, it's time to give up," said Edith, quietly. "You expect everyone else to obey you; now you must obey me."

"I'll do it, Edith, but you need not have given me the order. I'm ready to make a move, for there is the Yukon right behind us. Don't you hear the rushing of the water? Here is the point where the Unknown turned in, and it was a bad job for us that he did."

They were close to the low bank now, and a few strokes of the oars would easily have carried the row-boats over the intervening space.

But Ned did not want to resort to that if he could help it and he thought he could.

"Dick!" he called. "Oh, Dick!"

"Hello!"

"Go back to the engine room for one minute. I'm going to try to start again."

"I'll go," said Robbins quickly.

"As you like," replied Ned, "but Mr. Luckey goes too. Give me all the steam you have got even if you burst the boiler."

Dick and Dan Robbins ran below again and a mo-

ment later the Unknown appeared driving his

before him, the traitor Henri bringing up the rear

"We must land, Ned!" he shouted. "It is dead for us to stay here another instant. The bows are stove in and the treasure room is half full of water."

"Yes, and I'd have been drowned like a rat in a trap in a moment more," growled Magillicuddy.

"Confound you, Mac, why don't you pitch me overboard, and be done with it. I'd rather a black sight die than live to go back to Russia with you."

"I'm no murderer like you," grunted the Unknown, turning away. "You had better have kept away from the Klondike if you didn't want to be foul of me. You knew well enough I was here."

Magillicuddy scowled blackly. The Unknown had several times told Ned that he believed the Unknown had no other motive in coming to the Klondike than to kill him, and very likely this was the truth.

Ned rose prepared for his final effort.

To save the Ice Witch, even wrecked as it was of the highest importance, for the only alternative was to spend the night on shore in the rain, there was no telling to what disastrous consequences such an exposure might lead.

He gave Dick the bell and backed away the yacht sinking lower into the water every instant.

Then, when he had gained a respectable distance from the island, he gave the order to go ahead at full speed.

Breathlessly Edith and the Unknown watched the effect of this bold move.

It was completely successful. The yacht grounded with her bows forced well up over the bank.

"Hooray!" shouted the detective. "By the Junging Jeremiah, that's great! We are all right now and I see no reason why we should have any further fear."

"I knew I could do it," replied Ned, quietly. "I'm all over. Edith, my dear, you had better go back to bed. There's no current here to amount to anything and as we are, so we shall stay till morning."

"If you are going to remain here, Ned, I shall go too," Edith replied.

"I certainly shall stay here until sunrise," replied Ned. "You see what I've done, Dick?"

"Indeed I do," replied Dick, who had just come out of the engine room. "You've saved the yacht and the gold and all the provisions, but I don't suppose we shall ever be able to get her off of here."

"Probably not. We shall have to remain until we are taken off by the next boat that passes down the Yukon."

"Or up. We don't want to stay here a moment longer than we have to."

"There'll be one down first, never you fear. Now all hands to bed. Edith and I will keep watch."

"There's no bed for me this night," said the detective. "I'll put the prisoners in the galley and get them out of the way and then I'll mount guard in the morning."

The first part of the Unknown's programme was

carried out, but Ned finally persuaded him to turn in and take his sleep, which Dan Robbins and Fred Farrell also did. Dick remained in the pilot house till sunrise and by that time the storm had passed.

"Now to find out where we are," said Ned as the night began to come.

"This is probably an island," said Dick.

"Looks like it. Seems to extend down the river half a mile at least."

"Why can't we go ashore and explore it?" said Edith. "I'm tired to death of being stuck here in the pilot house."

"We can," replied Ned. "We'll go right away. Let your rifle; we may strike a flock of ducks before we get back."

When they dropped off the yacht they found the ground so wet that they sank into the mud almost ankle deep, but after advancing a few yards, they came to higher land, which was dry in comparison.

"I don't like this," said Ned, looking around at the dreary prospect.

"What's the matter?" Edith asked.

"Why, you know what these off shore islands are here in the Yukon? Half the time they are nothing but a lot of mud washed down from the mountains' sinking up around old trunks and branches."

"Same as that one we got stuck on when we were with the tally-ho?"

"Exactly. We had enough of it then; I don't like to have that experience repeated."

"We don't know that it is an island yet," said Dick. "We had better explore."

They pushed on over the dry and wet grass until they reached the trees.

Ned examined their roots and found them pretty firmly embedded in the soil.

"I guess this is all right," he said. "Very likely this island, if it is an island, was formed in the way I mentioned, but if that is so it has evidently been here a long time to judge by these trees."

"If the river rises much higher it will all be flooded," said Dick.

"Yes, and it's on the rise still."

"How do you know?"

"Oh, I have been watching that big rock in the channel near the yacht. The water has risen an inch since I first got sight of it. Nothing strange either, considering the amount of rain we have had."

They pushed on further and soon saw that they had come to their journey's end.

It was a long, narrow island upon which they had landed. The Unknown managed to run the Ice Witch into the narrow channel, or back-set, as it is called, between the island and the mainland.

There was no canyon as Ned had imagined, but the channel was filled with great boulders which had evidently been tumbled down the mountain side in past ages, and were most dangerous.

Yet it was navigable with the river as high as it now was, and Ned saw that if he had turned just a

little to the left, he might have passed around the island and go out into the open river.

The big rock upon which the Unknown first struck they saw afterward, when they returned to the other end of the island.

It lay right across the mouth of the back-set, and could easily have been avoided.

"So much for trying to run down the river on a dark night," said Ned. "Next time I'll know better. There should have been no night running. I see it now, but I don't blame Zed a bit, for it was I who did it first."

"We might as well go aboard," said Edith. "I shall have to begin thinking about breakfast."

The words were scarcely uttered when without the slightest warning a great mass of earth suddenly slipped into the Yukon, and there was a rush of water right up to where they stood.

Ned caught hold of Edith and pulled her back.

If Dick had not given a jump he would have gone down into the water.

"There you are!" cried Young Klondike. "That is what we have to expect. I tell you our troubles are not over yet. This island is just like the other one. It is crumbling away."

"Get back to the Ice Witch at once!" exclaimed Dick. "Perhaps we can patch her up. This is no safe place for us to stay."

When they reached the Ice Witch, Ned put on a bathing suit and went down under the yacht to ascertain how much damage had been done by the rocks.

He found, as he expected, that the keel was badly torn away, especially at the bow. Here it was so bad that Young Klondike almost despaired of remedying it.

"I don't believe much of anything can be done here," he said to Dick, who was standing on the shore when he came up.

"Badly busted, is it?" said Dick.

"Why, the keel is torn all to pieces by the bow. Even if we had the timber, I don't see how we could do much of anything to remedy it."

"Hello, down there! What's the report?" cried the Unknown, looking down from the deck.

"It's a bad one, Mr. McJee," replied Ned. And he repeated what he had said to Dick.

"There's a way out of it, dear boy," said the Unknown promptly. "If it is no worse than you say I believe the thing can be repaired."

"I don't doubt it in the least, but who is to do the job? We haven't a mechanic among us."

"What's the matter with me?"

"Everything. Without exaggeration I consider you the worst mechanic I ever knew."

"By the Jumping Jeremiah, that's complimentary!"

"It's a fact. Dan Robbins comes nearest to it, but he is no wood worker."

"No. I couldn't do it in anything but the worst kind of a botch way," said Dan; "besides I'm no

diver; it is as much as I can do to swim. I could no more work under water than I could fly."

"And even if we had anyone to do it, we have nothing to do it with," cried Dick. "There is no lumber aboard. It was a great oversight; we ought to have brought some along."

"There's plenty aboard!" said the detective, emphatically.

"Good enough! Glad to hear it!" cried Ned. "Perhaps you can tell me where you hid it?"

"I didn't hide it; it's right in the cabin."

"You mean for us to take the stateroom doors?" said Ned.

"Yes, or the timbers between the treasure room and the yacht's side. These could be ripped out without interfering with anything. There's lumber enough, goodness knows."

"I never thought of that," said Ned. "But who is to do the work?"

"A practical ship carpenter."

"It's no joking, Mr. McJee."

"If you McJee me I'll shy my hat at you. We have just such a person on board."

"Indeed! Who is he?"

"My man."

"Confound your man! If it hadn't been for all the fuss we've had with him I believe we would be well on our way to St. Michaels by this time."

"Like enough. All the same he is a ship carpenter by trade."

"Is that really so, Zed?"

"It is, dear boy, and I say let's put him to work. I believe he can do the job all right and, of course, he couldn't escape as things go. I've searched him thoroughly and know that he has no weapon about him. All we've got to do is to set him free."

"It's not a bad idea at all," mused Ned. "I'd like to see the scoundrel do something for his keep."

"Shall I bring him ashore?" asked the detective.

"I wish you would, and the sooner the better. Heavens! what was that?"

A strange rumbling sound was heard; the ground beneath their feet trembled as though shaken by an earthquake, and then all at once came a terrific splash.

"More land gone to the bad," cried the Unknown, who, being on the deck of the Ice Witch, had a better view than those on shore.

"Can you see it?" demanded Ned.

"No; it has sunk under the water," replied the detective, coolly.

"Pshaw! You know what I mean."

"You mean did I see it? Yes, I did. There was a big slide carried off at the lower end of the island. It will strike us up here very soon."

"The water is rising every moment," said Ned. "Robbins, is it possible to get up steam?"

"Can't be done," replied the engineer. "The water is two inches deep in the fire box and is still rising. If you'd go into the engine room, Young Klondike, you would see for yourself."

"I haven't time now. I'll take your word for it."

"What are you driving at?" inquired Dick.

"I was thinking whether we could run the Witch a little higher out of water," replied Ned.

"That would give us a better chance at the bottom."

"You don't have to," said the detective. "Mac can work just as well under water as any man; I believe he can do it."

"Nobody can do those repairs under water," declared Ned, emphatically; "but there are other ways of getting round it. Go bring up your man, Zed, and we will explain to him what we want. I think he may be able to help us out from what you say."

The Unknown went below and in a few moments returned accompanied by his man, who still had his arms tied behind him.

"Has Mr. McJee explained to you what we want?" asked Ned.

"Yes, he has," replied Magillicuddy, sullenly.

"Do you think you can help us out?"

"I don't know why I should."

"You should for your own sake. The yacht is stove in that we can't move, and this island is rapidly crumbling away with the flood."

"Well?"

"Do you want to be drowned?"

"I expect to be. I don't ever expect to get out this snap alive."

"What makes you think that?"

"Because the water is on the rise, and the boat all stove to pieces. I don't believe it can be repaired. Still, I'm willing to try."

"If you will try your best to help us out it is all I can ask."

"It will do me no good. I might as well die here as to be taken across to Siberia and handed over to the Russians."

"Ha, Mac! You wretch! I see what you are driving at. You want to make a bargain with me," the Unknown cried.

"Well, and why not?" growled Magillicuddy. "A man has got to do the best he can for himself, and I've got but a little capital to work on. I've got to make the most out of what I have."

"I'll never agree to give up!" cried the Unknown, pulling his plug hat down firmly upon his head.

"Then I'll not raise a hand to repair the yacht," said Magillicuddy sullenly.

"Zed," said Edith, in her quiet way.

"What?" demanded the detective.

"You do it."

"But, Edith! Think of all the years I have been hunting this fellow!"

"I say you do it. Do it for my sake. Give up the detective business. You've made money enough to live on. I say do it—will you, Zed?"

"By the Jumping Jeremiah, you have the slickest way of getting round a fellow of anyone who ever lived, Edith. Still I can't give up."

The words were scarcely uttered when there was

another rumble, and a huge slice of the island crumbled away and went whirling down the Yukon.

This time the break was at the end where Young Klondike and his friends were, and when all was quiet again the ground upon which they stood when watching the former break had entirely disappeared and the water came whirling about the new point of land thus formed not a dozen yards away from the yacht.

"We are lost if you don't do it, Zed!" cried Edith. "If we perish our deaths will rest on your head."

"That settles it!" cried the detective. "I see that I've got to yield. Go for it, Mac. If you repair the yacht and get us safe out of this snap I'll set you free when we reach St. Michaels, and quit chasing you from this time on."

"And it is time to decide it!" cried Ned. "Look! Look over there!"

Young Klondike pointed toward the shore as he spoke.

The mountain appeared to be moving slowly past them.

"The island is afloat!" said Ned. "It's now or never if we expect to save the yacht!"

CHAPTER XII.

JUST IN THE NICK OF TIME.

THE discovery that the island was actually floating struck consternation to the hearts of Young Klondike and his friends.

Work began instantly, Magillicuddy having consented to do his best to save the Ice Witch; but it must be admitted that Ned felt grave doubts as to whether there was still time to do this.

The Unknown immediately untied his man, took him below, and made him put on a bathing suit.

Then Magillicuddy went down under the yacht, and was gone so long that they began to think he was drowned.

When he came to the surface he looked very grave.

"She's badly broken up, gentlemen," he said. "If I had a fair show I could repair her all right, but it can't be done unless we can get her higher up on the shore."

"That can be done," said Ned.

"How?"

"We can fasten the big hawser to the bow, pass one end around that largest tree over there and work her up."

"I'm afraid not."

"I'm sure we can if all hands take hold."

"We can try it. It must be done first of all."

No time was lost. When the hawser was in place all hands got hold and tried to move the Ice Witch.

The yacht responded at first and came up on the shore about six inches and then stuck, and all their efforts were insufficient to move it any further.

"We can almost do it," said Magillicuddy. "If

we had the strength of one man more on the end of this rope I believe it could be done."

"There you are!" growled the Unknown. "That means you want Henri set free. We shall be prisoners ourselves next."

"As you please," replied Magillicuddy. "You know your own business best, Mac."

"It must be done," said Ned, emphatically. "Let Henri be brought up at once. As I understand it he's a carpenter, anyway. He can help take the partition down."

When Henri's strength was added to that of the others Ned's scheme proved entirely successful. The Ice Witch came up on the low shore seven or eight feet. After that it was impossible to move her further, but it was enough, for the damaged timbers at the bow were now fully exposed.

After that the work was advanced with all possible speed. Ned and Dick took Henri into the treasure room and they proceeded to tear away the partition, while the two Macs, assisted by Dan Robbins and Fred Farrell cut and ripped away the damaged timbers at the Ice Witch's bow.

Soon the work of repairing began in earnest. Fortunately there were plenty of tools on board the Ice Witch—Young Klondike never traveled without them—and before the day was over the damage was pretty well repaired after a clumsy fashion.

"It will not be water-tight," declared Magillicuddy. "You will have to keep the pumps going all the time, but I should think it might hold together for awhile. Anyhow it will enable you to get ashore and land the gold."

"It's all right," said Ned. "It's the best any man could do with the materials you had to work with. We'll pump her out and get on the move right away."

And indeed it was high time. All day long the island had been steadily moving down the Yukon. It went very slowly at first, then faster and faster, until now its progress was almost as rapid as the current itself.

And the breaking up of the island had continued.

First a big slice at one end would crumble away, and then the same thing would happen at the other. The old tree trunks went whirling downstream, where they were not so badly water-logged that they sunk instantly, as was very often the case. This had kept up until now there was but a small piece of the original island left afloat, and this by great good fortune happened to be the very part upon which the Ice Witch was stranded. It needed no prophet to tell Young Klondike that this must soon vanish, too.

Now came the momentous question of getting the yacht off again, a much more difficult task than it had proved to pull her up on the shore.

"The only way is to back off, I suppose," remarked Dick.

"I know of no other," said Magillicuddy, "and I think it can be done."

"Won't it tear your work all to pieces?"

"It's bound to damage it somewhat. I expected that."

"You think it will hold water after we are off?"

"That's what I count on. I guarantee nothing, though. Now, am I to be made a prisoner again, Young Klondike? That's what is interesting me the most just now."

"It rests with your friend Mac," replied Ned. "I've got nothing at all to say about it."

"No, let him stay as he is," said the detective when the question was put to him. "I'm through except that I want to say to you, Mac, that if you make us the least trouble I propose to give you a lead pill which will settle your hash forever. I've warned you. Now remember, for I mean every word I say."

"Huh! Try it. Two can play at that game," growled Magillicuddy, and he walked off among the few trees which remained on the floating island looking as sullen as when he first came out of the hold.

"To the pumps!" cried Ned. "We have to get to work right now."

There was another washout even as he spoke.

"Look out for yourself there, Mac!" cried the Unknown, for the break occurred very near where his man was standing looking off down the river.

"Mind your own business," growled Magillicuddy. "I know what I'm about."

"It looks to me as though if we waited a little longer there would be no trouble in getting the Ice Witch off," remarked Edith, as work on the pumps began.

"Better get your man aboard, Zed," remarked Young Klondike. "After what he has done for us I should not like to see him drowned."

"Suppose he won't come?" growled the detective. "I'm through with him. He is in your hands now."

Ned shouted to Magillicuddy, but got no answer. That singular individual was pacing up and down among the trees and pretended not to hear.

"He don't believe your promise, Zed," said Dick. "If he sees any chance of escape he means to take it—that's what's the matter with the man."

Work on the pumps now proceeded vigorously.

In less than half an hour the water had been very much lowered in the hold, and Dan Robbins was able to start his fire, but it was an hour before Fred Farrell reported the hold dry.

The time had now come to make the final effort to release the Ice Witch.

Once more Ned shouted to Magillicuddy, who still remained on the island.

"Come, come! You must come aboard now!" he cried, "we are going to make a start."

Without answering the man turned and started to walk back toward the Ice Witch when all at once, without the slightest warning, the last vestige of land crumbled away.

The Ice Witch keeled over to one side, righted and was once more afloat.

"By the Jumping Jeremiah, my man!" cried the detective. "I wouldn't lose him for half a million Mac! Mac! Oh, Mac!"

There was one wild cry, one moment when Young Klondike saw a hand extended up above the swirling debris and that was all.

It was the last the Unknown or anyone else ever saw of the unfortunate Magillicuddy, for he was swept down the Yukon with the mass of tree trunks and rubbish from which, good swimmer though he was, he was probably unable to extricate himself.

Again and again the Unknown shouted to him, but it was all in vain.

"That's the last of him!" growled the detective. "Well, well, well! He wouldn't believe in me, but I did actually intend to set him free."

This sudden death threw a gloom over all hands.

It looked like a forerunner of what they might expect themselves.

"It's Mac's own fault," the Unknown persisted in saying over and over again. "If he had only trusted me he might be alive yet. Ye gods and little fishes I can scarcely realize that he is dead. It is many years since I first began this hunt for him, and during all that time I have been on the go. Believe it or not, boys, there is scarcely a country in the world that I have not visited. To think that it should end like this."

"After all it ended just as Magillicuddy anticipated," said Ned. "Didn't he say that he had no hope of escaping; that he fully expected to be drowned?"

And this, strange as it may seem, was the truth.

Meanwhile, the Ice Witch was speeding on down the Yukon, but long before morning Magillicuddy's predictions were fully verified.

The repairs just enabled the yacht to float, and that was all—they did not serve to keep the water out of her hold. It took constant work at the pumps, and as the night advanced Ned saw that the timbers must be working loose, for the water began to gain on them and kept steadily increasing.

A council of war was held at the breakfast table. Ned was of the opinion that they had better sacrifice the gold.

"We don't have to throw it overboard," he said. "We can land somewhere and bury it. Of course it will delay our final departure from Alaska, but that is no great matter. Once we have lightened the yacht, I believe we shall have no difficulty in reaching St. Michaels. There we can dry-dock her and put her in thorough condition, and then come back up the river after the gold."

"I don't know," said the Unknown. "I'm almost of the opinion that even the landing of the gold won't save us. The yacht has been thoroughly shaken and every seam is open. Of course it is all my fault, and—By the Jumping Jeremiah, what is that?"

There was a sudden shock which sent the dishes flying about the table.

All sprang up and ran on deck.

Dick was in the pilot house, and all around them as the ice again.

"I've fixed it now!" cried Dick, dismally; "we've struck the ice!"

"I should say we had!" exclaimed Ned, running to take the wheel. "What did we run against?"

"A big cake. See, there isn't much of it. I thought I could run through without disturbing you. This is the way I've done it. The whole bottom must have been knocked off the Ice Witch by that blow."

It was evident that the accident was likely to prove a serious one, for the Ice Witch was rapidly sinking in the water.

Dan Robbins called up from the engine room that the water was coming up around the fire box again.

"To the pumps, all hands!" cried Ned.

The Unknown flew to obey, assisted by Edith and Henri, while Dick, by Ned's direction, ran to open the treasure room, Fred Farrell going with him.

"There's no help for it, Ned sung out cheerfully. "We've got to pitch the gold overboard, nothing else will save us now."

Even as he gave these orders Young Klondike headed the Ice Witch for the shore, but as it happened they were now at one of the widest parts of the river, and the danger was very great.

"The pumping goes for nothing, dear boy!" cried the detective. "We may just as well give it up and all hands get to work on the gold, for nothing will save us but to lighten our ship."

"Look! Look!" cried Edith, suddenly. "Here comes a steamer around that point."

"Hooray!" shouted Ned. "It's the old Eagle! First boat out of Dawson for St. Michaels. If we can only make them understand we may yet save the gold."

He immediately turned the Ice Witch and headed her toward the approaching steamer, while the Unknown ran to the flagstaff and lost no time in sending up the Stars and Stripes reversed.

"They understand!" cried Ned, as the Eagle's whistle gave several hoarse croaks. "They see us and will lend a hand."

Just then Dan Robbins came hurrying up out of the engine room.

"It's no use, boss," he said. "My fires are going out. You may be able to run a few hundred yards further on what little steam we have, but that will settle it. I guess we are going down all right enough this time."

"I guess not," said Ned. "Look there!"

"Great Scott! The Eagle! Heading right for us, too. Have you signaled her yet?"

"Yes; she understands enough of the situation. They will lose no time. Get below, everybody, and help Dick and Fred Farrell with the gold."

Anxious moments followed.

Box after box of gold was brought on deck.

Every moment the Ice Witch was settling lower in the water.

It seemed as if the Eagle must have been further off than Ned thought for; there was still a considerable distance between the two boats when the last box of gold came on deck.

"Get our traps up out of the cabin, Dick!" shouted Ned. "The engine has stopped now, and all I can do is to hold her steady. Hello, there! Hello!"

"Hello!" came the hail from the Eagle. "What craft are you?"

"Ice Witch, of Dawson City," replied Ned.

"Young Klondike—that you?"

"Hello, Captain Cutts! Hello!"

"What's the matter?"

"We are sinking. Quick! I've got a million dollars in gold aboard!"

Probably this information was not needed to make Captain Cutts do his best, for Young Klondike knew him well.

Yet by the time the Eagle came alongside the Ice Witch, the cabin was all under water and the guard rail stood almost on a level with the surface of the Yukon.

In a few hasty words Ned explained the situation, and Captain Cutts brought the Eagle close enough alongside to make it possible to throw the boxes of gold over on her deck.

Many willing hands made short work of the job, and then such articles as Dick had been able to rescue from the cabin were tossed over to the other steamer.

By this time it was only a question of a few minutes with the Ice Witch, and Ned proceeded to lower the boat.

No time was lost in getting aboard, and Ned and Dick pulled across to the Eagle, which had now stood off a little so as not to be caught in the swirl when the Ice Witch went down.

Edith went up over the Eagle's side first, and the Unknown was the last to leave the boat. Before he could reach the deck, the Ice Witch suddenly settled forward and sank out of sight in the rapid running waters of the Yukon.

"Just in the nick of time," remarked Young Klondike, as he stood between Dick and Edith and saw her go.

It was all over now, and the Eagle steamed on down the river, reaching St. Michaels in due time and without further adventure.

Here Young Klondike's party was fortunate enough to find a steamer bound for San Francisco and ready to sail.

Ned hastened to engage passage for all hands, and leaving Henri to go his way unmolested, our friends a little later found themselves safe in the Golden City, from whence they went direct to New York by rail.

Their arrival created no little excitement among mining circles, for no such successful operators from the Klondike had as yet returned.

But Ned and Dick have had enough of mining, and

intend to settle down to enjoy their hard-earned wealth.

As a matter of fact, it is but a few weeks since their arrival, and they are to-day living at a fashionable uptown hotel.

The Unknown declares that he is going to start on a tour around the world at once, but Ned intends to build a house on Fifth avenue opposite the park, where Dick will reside with him.

Being many times a millionaire, Ned's house is

likely to rival the finest palaces on that famous street.

Thus the adventures of our two New York boys in the great Yukon gold fields happily ended in wealth and prosperity.

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[THE END.]

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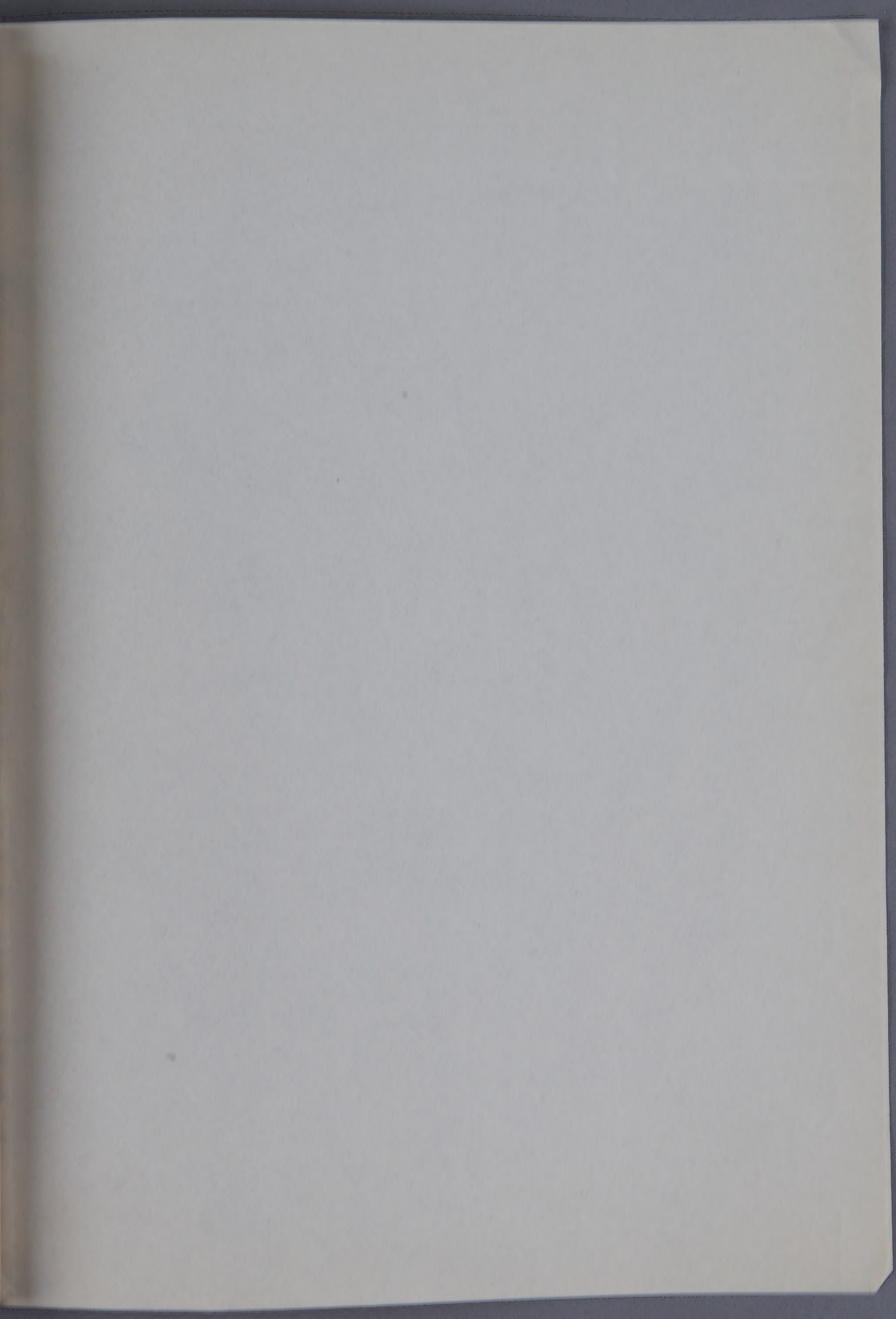
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2. The second step is to analyze the data.

3. The third step is to develop a hypothesis.

4. The fourth step is to test the hypothesis.

5. The fifth step is to evaluate the results.

6. The sixth step is to draw conclusions.

7. The seventh step is to communicate the findings.

8. The eighth step is to implement the solution.

9. The ninth step is to monitor the progress.

10. The tenth step is to review the process.

11. The eleventh step is to document the results.

12. The twelfth step is to share the information.

13. The thirteenth step is to learn from the experience.

14. The fourteenth step is to improve the process.

15. The fifteenth step is to repeat the cycle.

16. The sixteenth step is to ensure sustainability.

17. The seventeenth step is to maintain communication.

18. The eighteenth step is to stay flexible.

19. The nineteenth step is to be proactive.

20. The twentieth step is to embrace change.

21. The twenty-first step is to foster innovation.

22. The twenty-second step is to encourage collaboration.

23. The twenty-third step is to build trust.

24. The twenty-fourth step is to set clear goals.

25. The twenty-fifth step is to track progress.

26. The twenty-sixth step is to celebrate success.

27. The twenty-seventh step is to reflect on the journey.

28. The twenty-eighth step is to stay motivated.

29. The twenty-ninth step is to be resilient.

30. The thirtieth step is to never give up.